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IN WARTIME IRAQ

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THE U.S. MILITARY'S
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PETER MAASS

THE NEW REPUBLIC

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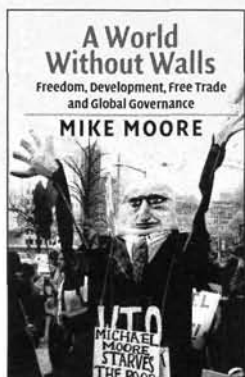
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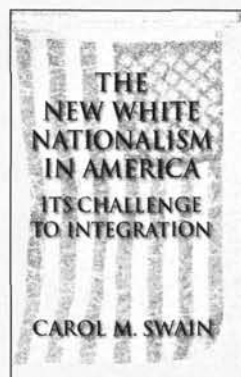


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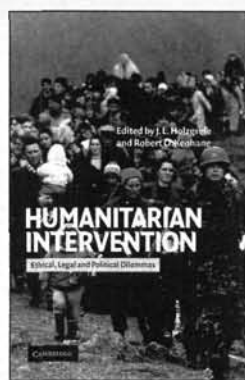
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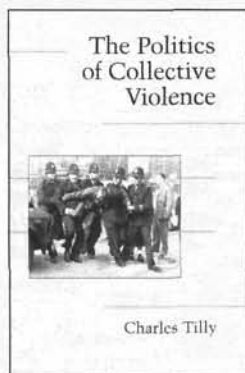
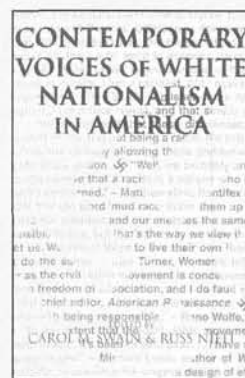


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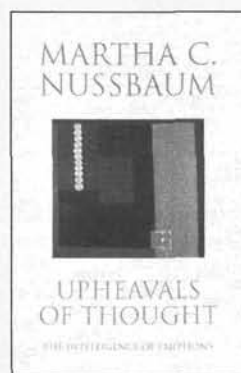


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A JOURNAL OF POLITICS AND THE ARTS

MARCH 31, 2003 WASHINGTON, D.C. ISSUE 4,602 VOLUME 228

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NEW REPUBLIC

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CORRESPONDENCE

ENGINE TROUBLE

IN HIS ARTICLE "CAR TALK," GREGG Easterbrook explains patiently and thoroughly the challenges that a hydrogen future must confront for it to be viable (February 24). In his effort to examine this issue thoroughly, he mentions almost everything from simple energy solutions (such as raising fuel-efficiency levels, "reform that is practical and affordable") to those more complex (solar collectors in space, "even if capital cost were no object").

Despite this range of overview, he ignored one viable possibility in the area of biomass that is technologically simple but politically challenging. Perhaps because of that political difficulty, no one, including Easterbrook, mentions hemp as the superior biomass source that it is. Easterbrook rightly dismissed most currently available biomass sources due to the energy-intensive growing processes along with the polluting properties of biomass combustion for energy. Along these lines, it has been shown that hemp is unique. Hemp does not require fertilizers for the effective production of biomass to occur. This effective production can even occur on relatively poor soil—leaving richer soils for food production. At the same time, through a process called pyrolysis, hemp can be converted to charcoal, which is in turn burned relatively cleanly (compared with other carbon-based sources) to power the creation of hydrogen. Lastly, this process can be quickly applied using many existing biomass facilities.

While hemp is not the Holy Grail that some might think it is, it could easily become a viable part of our nation's transition toward energy independence while being cleaner, safer, and cheaper than other options that Easterbrook mentioned. It is time we examined all the possibilities.

OWEN WORMSER

Shelburne Falls, Massachusetts

EASTERBROOK'S ARTICLE ABOUT President George W. Bush's h-car proposal was excellent except for his omission of the hydropower option. The Pacific Northwest has a grand opportunity to use off-peak, very cheap hydropower to electrolyze water from the Columbia River and to produce large quantities of hydrogen. Calculations show that the cost of this hydrogen would compete very

effectively with gasoline. It could be used in automobiles with conventional internal-combustion engines that have been converted to run on both hydrogen and gasoline at the flip of a switch, giving them a range that is sufficient for the early stages of a transition to a widespread hydrogen infrastructure.

JERRY SCHNEIDER

Corvallis, Oregon

IMUST TAKE EASTERBROOK TO TASK for claiming that hydrogen makes up "two-thirds of the oceans." I assume that this figure was mistakenly extrapolated from water's well-known chemical formula, H_2O . It is true that two-thirds of the atoms in the oceans' water are hydrogen atoms, but Easterbrook's characterization is misleading. A layperson reading "Car Talk" would most likely assume that Easterbrook is describing hydrogen's share of the oceans' mass. Given the 16-fold disparity in mass between an oxygen atom and a hydrogen atom, a more accurate description for THE NEW REPUBLIC's readers would be to claim that the ocean is $(1+1)/(1+1+16)$, or one-ninth, hydrogen.

MATT ZANON

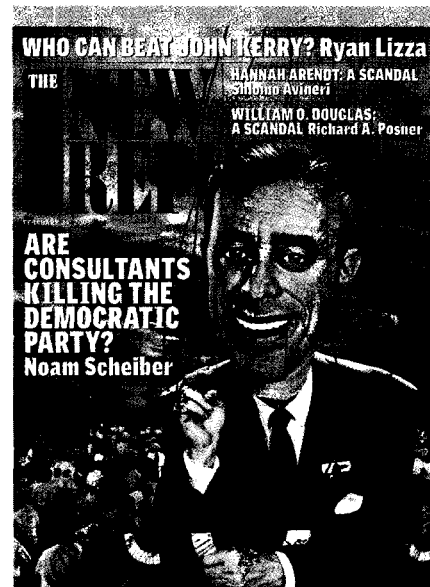
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GREGG EASTERBROOK REPLIES:

DOES THIS MEAN THAT THE HUMAN body is not, as so often described, "two-thirds water"? Water has far less mass than bone and other components of the final third. At any rate, I was trying to be simple, and two-thirds hydrogen is a correct description of the oceans if you are counting the atoms rather than weighing them.

YESTERDAY'S GONE

MOST AMERICANS ARE FAR MORE in tune with France's and Russia's ulterior motives than with our own U.S. history (Peter Beinart, "Crass Act," February 24).



It is hard to argue with the rest of the world when we aren't even aware of the extent of our own contribution to the horrors in the Middle East only a few short years ago. Peter Beinart suggested that members of this administration would do well to come clean and acknowledge "their past moral culpability." I could not agree more. But I would go further. I would arrest the perpetrators on our side: Henry Kissinger, Donald Rumsfeld, Dick Cheney, George H.W. Bush, and let's throw Robert McFarlane in with the lot of them as well. Future leaders of the United States and throughout the rest of the world might then understand that the jig is up, that Americans are finally serious about abiding by international law.

KURT SCHWEIGER

Minneapolis, Minnesota

FRIENDLY IRE

TNR'S EDITORIAL "WITHER NATO" shows an incredible ignorance of what is going on in Europe (February 24). True

continued on page 37

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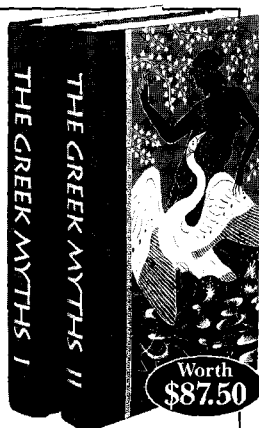
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Sovereign Powers

MANY AMERICANS ARE looking forward to the “we told you so” moment. The moment—after Iraqi troops surrender en masse, after the residents of Basra and Baghdad embrace our GIs—when people around the world finally admit that we were on the side of the angels all along. But, even if Iraqi troops do surrender and Iraqi civilians do cheer, that moment of public international redemption will probably not arrive. That’s because the global debate over war was never really about whether Saddam Hussein could be easily toppled or even whether the Iraqi people would rejoice if he were. Reasonable people around the world agreed about the risks of overthrowing Saddam. The critical debate was about the risks of *not* toppling him. Most Americans became convinced, after September 11, 2001, that we lived in a new era in which the risk of inaction in Iraq seemed grave. Most non-Americans thought the risk was trivial, and the most menacing thing about this new era was America’s new pretext for war. By invading Iraq, we will necessarily leave that debate unsettled—since no one will ever know what Saddam, in tandem with terrorists, might have done if left in power.

In retrospect, international opposition to the war was so powerful that it swallowed up—and undermined—domestic opposition to the war. Mainstream doves spent less time arguing that Saddam could be disarmed without war, or that he could be deterred and contained without disarmament, than that the U.S. must not go to war alone. The effect was to outsource critical strategic and moral judgments beyond America’s borders. Indeed, had President Bush actually cajoled France, Russia, and Guinea into endorsing force at the United Nations, a great many domestic doves would have found themselves unwittingly transformed, by their own logic, into hawks.

The antiwar camp was wrong to base its opposition on American isolation rather than on the specifics of the war itself. But that does not mean global political (if not cultural) antipathy toward the United States is not a problem. Hawks are rightly skeptical of the charge that such antipathy will undermine the war on terrorism; after all, cooperation with the United States against Al Qaeda is in the self-interest of the vast majority of governments on earth. But there is another problem, which hawks have not yet adequately faced: The United States cannot be an international pariah and simultaneously lead a



global crusade for democracy. No U.S. administration will continue promoting free elections if they bring anti-American regimes to power. Already, in the post-September 11 era, elections in Pakistan have seen the dramatic rise of radical fundamentalist parties. The result is an elected parliament considerably more hostile to the United States than the unelected general, Pervez Musharraf, who presides over it. In recent years, the United States has urged the Turkish military to pull back from politics and allow full democracy to flourish. And so, this month, Ankara’s pro-war military stood by and watched its parliament deny assistance to America’s war effort in Iraq. In Jordan, pro-American King Abdullah has twice postponed parliamentary elections, which he reportedly fears will be won by fundamentalist parties. If war with Iraq turns Jordanian opinion further in the Islamists’ direction in the coming months, will the Bush administration really push the king to give them a shot at power? Or will it decide that, while Iraq needs democracy, Jordan already has more than enough?

To some degree, this rising anti-Americanism is the inevitable product of the war against terrorism, a war that leads to greater American meddling into the internal financial, political, and military affairs of other countries. As State Department Director of Policy Planning Richard Haass told *The New Yorker*’s Nicholas Lemann last year, “What you’re seeing from this administration is the emergence of a new principle or body of ideas . . . about what you might call the limits of sovereignty.” When the United States imposes such limits on others, it is bound to breed resentment.

But, when the United States imposes such limits on others and brazenly refuses to accept them itself, it makes things much worse. And this is exactly what the Bush administration has done, by embracing a post-September 11 interventionism without shedding its pre-September 11 isolationism. In the 1990s, the obsession with violations of U.S. sovereignty became something close

to a credo on the American right. The Contract with America, for instance, said nothing about world affairs except that the United States should restrict its participation in international peacekeeping, and American troops should never serve under the U.N. flag. President Bush has continued in this spirit, operating under the general assumption that international organizations and agreements should never limit America’s freedom to maneuver. The result has been a dizzying rejection of international treaties. To get the cumulative effect, consider the following headlines: “U.S. BOYCOTTS NUCLEAR TEST BAN MEETING” (*The Washington Post*, November 12, 2001); “U.S. SCUTTLES GERM WAR CONFERENCE” (*The Washington Post*, December 8, 2001); “U.S., EUROPE CLASH AT CHILD SUMMIT” (*The Washington Times*, May 9, 2002); “EUROPEAN UNION RATIFIES TREATY AIMED AT CURBING GLOBAL WARMING; U.S. ALONE IN OPPOSITION” (Associated Press, May 31, 2002); “U.S. OPPOSITION TO NEW INTERNATIONAL COURT GETS BAD REVIEWS ABROAD” (*Kansas City Star*, July 13, 2002); and “U.S. SLAMS TORTURE CONVENTION REFORM” (Associated Press Online, November 7, 2002). Remarkably, each of these rebuffs took place after September 11, 2001, after the Bush administration had declared its right to intervene aggressively in the internal affairs of countries throughout the world.

The point isn’t that the United States was wrong in each fight. It is that, compared with America’s war against terrorism and weapons of mass destruction, the stakes in each fight were trivial. But they served as a disastrous backdrop to America’s efforts on Iraq at the United Nations. After all, within close to a year of torpedoing half a dozen U.N. initiatives, in September 2002 President Bush journeyed to Turtle Bay to tell the assembled nations that, unless they sanctioned America’s war with Iraq, they were dooming the United Nations to irrelevance. Are we really surprised that the result was, and continues to be, anti-American fury across the globe?

Addressing this anti-Americanism will be one of the Bush administration’s primary challenges in the wake of war with Iraq. To do so effectively, it must realize that it has only partially adapted itself to this new age. The more aggressive the United States becomes in response to real threats to its security, the more generous and accommodating it must become about everything else. Otherwise, the hostility we foment will undo the democratic mission that this war is supposed to begin. And, by the administration’s own logic, it is the success of that democratic mission that will, in the long run, keep us safe.

PETER BEINART

The Eve of War

THE TALKING IS over, the shooting has not yet begun. There is dread, and there is hope. As is well known, war is not the friend of clear thinking, so in these ominous days in the aftermath of diplomacy it is worth pondering what we have learned so far.

What we have not learned from the debacle at the United Nations is that the United States is wrong. The popularity of a proposition says nothing about the merit of a proposition. History (unlike politics) is not a popularity contest. The enthusiasm of the entire world for our campaign against Saddam Hussein, hard as it is to imagine, easy as it is to desire, would have proved nothing about the justice of our

campaign. Nor is its justice proved by our relative loneliness in the international community. If our war is just, then it is just in itself, because of the ideals that are embodied in its ends and the scruples that are embodied in its means. The American position was rejected at the Security Council, but it was not refuted. We lost a vote, not an argument.

Still, the discouraging experience at the United Nations must not be allowed to fester in American minds until it becomes a smug solipsism, a happy contempt for the opinion of the world. The United States is the most powerful country on earth, but it is not the earth. We are colliding regularly with the limitations of our power: in Turtle Bay, in various European ministries and streets, in Korea, in Turkey, in the war against terrorism. Some of these frustrations are certainly unavoidable; there is even a gift of honor in some of them. (Jacques Chirac rejected Tony Blair's compromise at the Security Council even before Saddam Hussein did. Are we to be stung by the disapproval of Jacques Chirac?) And yet who does not wish that we enjoyed more sympathy for our cause, not least because our cause is right? Historians will puzzle how it happened that the Bush ad-

ministration contrived to depose one of the world's great monsters in a way that left it almost friendless. In retrospect, certainly, the bumptious unilateralist defiance of the early days of the Bush administration has turned out to have been a strategic blunder. When you are as strong as we are, arrogance is superfluous. It is in our interest to have friends.

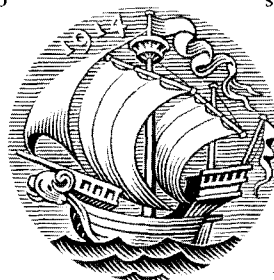
The discussion of multilateralism and unilateralism deserves to be sharpened. Multilateralism does not always, or usually, mean the capture of American sovereignty by international institutions. Our sovereignty is not so easily nullified; and whatever is wrong with the United Nations, it is not exactly a nightmare of one-worldism. We are not acting in defiance of the United Nations in Iraq; we are acting as the autonomous state that we are, in the defense of our own understanding of our interests and our values. So are we acting unilaterally? Well, not exactly. We have properly seized upon Security Council Resolution 1441 as another source of the legitimacy of our actions. And we are not completely friendless in this enter-

prise, either. There are 30 nations in what the State Department calls the "Coalition for the Immediate Disarmament of Iraq." That is considerably better than Gary Cooper did in *High Noon*. (According to Colin Powell, there are also 15 countries that are supporting us anonymously.) In East Asia, moreover, we are the most doctrinaire of multilateralists, refusing to engage the reprocessing nut in Pyongyang except in the company of the other regional powers.

The United States did not sacrifice its principles in attempting to bring about a diplomatic solution to this crisis; it acted on its principles. But diplomacy failed. It failed because of the reach and the depth of contemporary anti-Americanism, which is a phenomenon to which the Bush administration should start paying serious attention; but mainly it failed because Saddam Hussein refused to make a strategic decision to disarm, as the international community demanded of him, and instead turned the inspections into a scavenger hunt. Yet the failure at the United Nations must not provoke a more general despair about diplomacy, or encourage a provincialist illusion of splendid American isolation. In international affairs, isolation is never

splendid, though sometimes it is what there is. The belief that we are alone in the world can quickly grow into the belief that this is how it should be, owing to our virtue or to our luck; and such a view is nothing but another variety of isolationism. The United States will not be able to lead if it does not care whether

the world follows. Leadership embroils us in the world, implicates us in it. If we were really immune or indifferent to the world that so zealously exasperates us, there would not be a quarter of a million American soldiers in the sands. May the work of their hands be swift and strong and merciful, and leave only freedom in its wake. ■



NOTEBOOK

MAILER READS MINDS . . . BUSH PREDICTS THE FUTURE

WHY ARE WE IN IRAQ?

WHEN LAST WE TOOK NOTE OF the fevered meanderings of Norman Mailer's mind, the Consciousness of the Age was calculating, in the *Times* of London, that an American citizen's likelihood of having died in the World Trade Center on September 11 was lower than that citizen's chance of one day dying in an automobile accident; he deduced from this that we should perhaps accept such a "tolerable level to terror" (Notebook, September 23, 2002). The previous year, barely six weeks after the Twin Towers fell, Mailer had told a Dutch audience, "Everything wrong with America led to the point where the country built that tower of Babel, which consequently had to be destroyed" (Notebook, November 26, 2001). So perhaps we should consider it progress that, with the country on the brink of war with Iraq, Mailer has at least found the nerve to share his imbecilities with an American audience—specifically, those in attendance at the Commonwealth Club in San Francisco on February 20, as well as readers of *The New York Review of Books*, which was kind enough to adapt Mailer's remarks for publication in its March 27 issue.

Mailer's conceit is that he will rely upon the novelistic imagination "to understand what the President and his inner cohort see as the logic of their present venture." And what is that logic? Damned if we know. Mailer conducts an encyclopedic survey of antiwar and anti-American platitudes offered by figures as diverse as John le Carré, Harold Pinter, Ralph Nader, and Robert Byrd—none of whom, we feel certain, figure prominently in the administration's thinking—but he seems decidedly uncertain of what, exactly, the "covert motives" he intends to unearth might be. After 2,000 words of windup, he finally produces, at least implicitly, an explanation: The war is a way of wagging the tax cut. It is intended to distract the United States from a lousy economy, shattered



Norman Mailer

institutions (the Catholic Church, the FBI), corporate marketing ("a beast and a force that succeeded in taking America away from most of us"), and such aesthetic misfortunes as "shopping malls encircled by low-level condominiums" and "plastic, ubiquitous plastic, there to numb an infant's tactile senses, front-runner in the competition to see which new substance could make the world more disagreeable." The closest Mailer offers to a connection between these domestic misfortunes and war is this: "Without September 11, George W. Bush would have been living in the non-stop malaise of uglier and uglier media. It could even be said that America was taking a series of hits that were not wholly out of proportion to what happened to the Germans after World War I, when inflation wiped out the fundamental German notion of self. . . . It is likely that Hitler would never have come to power ten years later without that runaway inflation."

So inflation begat Hitler and plastic begat Bush? If so, plastic indeed has much to answer for, for as Mailer continues, "Behind the whole push to go to war is the desire to have a huge military presence in the Near East as a stepping stone to taking over the rest of the world." There isn't a high school senior in the country who could have put the point better. And, by conquering the world, the Bush administration will be making it safe for straight sex: "[O]ne perk for the White House, should America become an international military machine huge enough to conquer all adversaries, is that American sexual freedom, all that gay, feminist, lesbian, transvestite hullabaloo, will be seen as too much of a luxury and will be put back in the closet again." (Here Mailer may have been pandering to his San Francisco audience.) Mailer also entertains the novel suspicion that "some of the brighter neocons" intend for China to become America's subjugated supplier of graduate students in science and engineering, "Greek slaves to us Romans." Finally, though, he makes a welcome admission: "The need for powerful theory can fall into many an abyss of error. I could, for example, be entirely wrong about the deeper motives of the administration." At last, a glimmer of thought.

EVITABILITY

THE BUSHIES ARE BIG BELIEVERS in the "aura of inevitability," their thinking being that, if they say something is inevitable, it will become so. The greatest example of this strategy was the final days of the 2000 presidential campaign, when, despite polls showing a down-to-the-wire race, Karl Rove confidently predicted a sweeping Bush victory and sent his man to campaign in California, a state he had virtually no chance of winning. The press dutifully responded with articles implying that the election was already over: "[F]or Bush, the

trip yesterday was an important display of confidence in the final hour—a yardstick by which voters could measure how well he is doing elsewhere, strategic proof that he has Gore's back against the wall," announced *The Boston Globe*.

Last week, the Bushies tried a similar tack in their efforts to secure nine votes in the U.N. Security Council to authorize the use of force in Iraq. Every day, it seemed, a Bush administration official would report that the United States was on the verge of picking up the nine votes. First, on March 9, Secretary of State Colin Powell appeared on the Sunday shows to declare that the United States was "in striking distance" of a majority. The next day, after previously undecided Pakistan indicated it would oppose the resolution, Powell implied to reporters that he knew something they didn't: "You can make your own count, we'll make our vote count." Two days later, although still none of the undecided Security Council members had announced their support, White House and State Department officials again told reporters in briefings that the United States was on the verge of securing nine votes. The press obligingly responded with a slew of optimistic articles: "POWELL HOPEFUL ON VOTE BY U.N." (*The Philadelphia Inquirer*, March 10); "U.S. SAYS IT GAINS VOTES FOR IRAQ DEAL" (*The Washington Post*, March 13); "U.S. STILL HOPEFUL OF 9 VOTES AT U.N. FOR

IRAQ MEASURE" (*The New York Times*, March 13). But the administration's rosy pronouncements—and the rosy articles they birthed—turned out to be complete bunk: None of the six undecided countries the United States lobbied ever publicly committed to voting for the resolution, which was ultimately scrapped as a result. Come to think of it, Bush lost the popular vote, too.

KEEPING PERSPECTIVE

WE ALSO HAVE A WAR WE HAVE to fight, too—the Washington Wizards are trying to make the playoffs. ... It's pretty much the same thing."
—Wizards point guard Tyrone Lue, Associated Press, March 17

HOME NEWS

WE ARE PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE that TNR art critic Jed Perl has been selected as the first Marian and Andrew Heiskell Visiting Critic at the American Academy in Rome. He will use his time in Rome to finish his forthcoming book about art in mid-twentieth-century Manhattan, *New Art City*, to be published by Knopf. Meanwhile, theater critic Robert Brustein will spend the spring semester at the Columbia University School of Journalism as a National Arts Journalism Program senior fellow, working on a book about the history of the American Repertory Theatre, of which he was the longtime director. ■

Inside the Box | Bruce Reed

LAST RESORT Bush pledges Middle East peace plan: "But I still like my Middle East war plan better."

MAD DOGS Rumsfeld apologizes to Blair for saying U.S. would go to war without Britain: "Nothing personal—we're not bringing State with us, either."

UNDER THE RADAR With no one watching, conservatives press on with tort reform, late-term abortion, Alaska drilling. GOP: "If we don't attack now, it will get too hot."

CLUE FINDERS CIA, FBI say they're closing in on Osama bin Laden: "It only took us nine months to find Elizabeth Smart, and she was more than a block away."



PEACE IN OUR TIME

Carter says Iraq doesn't cross threshold of a just war: "Luckily, there's no threshold for a just Peace Prize."



MARCH MADNESS Bush rejects moderates' plea that we can't afford big tax cut in wartime: "That's no excuse—we couldn't afford them in peacetime, either!"

DUG IN Archaeologists say Iraq attack will halt all digs in region. Administration response: "War is just archaeology by other means."

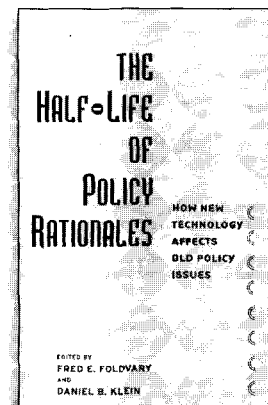
VIVE LA DIFFERENCE

France shows no remorse: "The more regimes change, the more we stay the same!"

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Kuwait City Dispatch Pressed

BY PETER MAASS

LAST WEEK, I watched nearly a dozen British tanks and armored vehicles storm across the Kuwaiti desert on cue—literally. The British military had arranged a “press facility,” as they call such affairs, and, although the men and women of the media had been delayed for 90 minutes at a police checkpoint on the highway leading to the border with Iraq, there was no danger of missing the maneuvers. Staged with the panache of a Broadway play, the spectacle would commence at whatever hour the audience arrived with its cameras and notepads.

After the press convoy showed up at a British desert base 20 miles south of the Iraqi border, an officer from the 1st Royal Fusiliers of the 7th Armored Brigade gave us a quick security briefing—so we could “leave with the same number of body parts” with which we arrived—and instructed us to stand behind a length of white ribbon placed about 20 yards from a serpentine trench. He pointed to the horizon, where the silhouettes of Challenger tanks and Warrior fighting vehicles were visible. In one minute, he said, they would arrive at the trench.

Smack on time, the metal monsters ground to a halt in clouds of dust and disgorged a squad of combat soldiers who rushed forward, bayonets drawn, to attack imaginary Iraqis who lacked the wisdom to surrender. One of the Brits lost a boot as he lunged forward. (The humiliation of having it returned to him by a journalist would come later.) After the mock assault, an officer stood in front of us—there were nearly 100 journalists on the scene—and said he’d heard that some cameramen wanted to get shots of the now-idling tanks moving directly at them in a “V” formation. The money shot was duly stage-managed. Afterward, we were invited to interview the victorious soldiers and inspect their imposing weaponry.

This is old-fashioned war propaganda. The images of hardworking grunts bravely preparing for battle are intended to bolster support back home and, if the enemy happens to be watching or listening or reading, to convey the message that resistance will be futile and, in all likelihood, fatal. With more than 600 journalists “embedded” with military units in the desert and field trips offered every day for “unilateral” journalists (as we, the un-embedded, are branded on our orange press cards), a lot of canned journalism has been occurring in Kuwait. Until a few days ago, this propaganda war seemed different from previous ones only in its breadth, rather than in its content or effect. But things have taken a startling turn, as I learned from Colonel Chris Vernon, the

congenitally blunt and jovially boastful spokesman for the British military. “We’re showing what we’ve got, and we would like the message to get out to the people and to the regime of Iraq,” said Vernon, whose broad shoulders and chin-back, chest-forward posture make him a casting director’s dream of a British officer. “We would wish to translate success into a message. Therefore, if we were to have success in some part of Iraq, we would like that success to be seen by elements of the leadership and the population.”

A few days before the press facility, I had chatted with Vernon at the Hilton Hotel and Resort (where the United States and the United Kingdom have set up their military press center) about Basra, the southern Iraqi city less than 50 miles from Kuwait that is expected to be the first target of the invasion; the Brits are to take Basra while the Americans move north to seize Baghdad. Vernon, who in the 1990s was a spokesman in Bosnia for the U.N. peacekeeping force, went out of his way to say the Brits would likely provide a military escort to carefully selected members of the international media so that news of the liberation of Basra might ignite an uprising in Baghdad and the collapse of the regime. “If I bring Christiane Amanpour into Basra to broadcast from the roof of the Sheraton, it’s not because I want her to earn another one hundred thousand pounds in salary,” Vernon told me. “It’s because I have a military objective that is served by broadcasting the liberation of a city to the rest of Iraq that has not been liberated. We want the regime and the people to know it and feel it.” Vernon made the same point during the press facility in the desert and apparently has been making it to my colleagues. A March 13 story by *Newsday*’s Edward Gargan quoted “a senior British officer”—no prizes for guessing who that might be—as saying, “I’m not doing this so that the CNN correspondent gets another £100,000 in their salary. I’m doing it because the regime watches CNN. I want them to see what is happening. ... Yes, we are using them. We use everything we have.” And, while those few lucky correspondents are being “used” in Basra, the rest of us will presumably have to settle for watching them on television: Word is that the U.S. and British military will try to deny access to Basra to journalists who are traveling on their own.

If his scenario plays out—and, by the time you read this story, it may already have—the coup de grâce against Saddam Hussein will be delivered not by Delta Force and the 82nd Airborne in Baghdad but by Christiane Amanpour and CNN in Basra. Regardless of what happens in Iraq in these crucial days, a strategic Rubicon has been crossed by the Pentagon: When the occasion arises, the press will be used, and will likely permit itself to be used, as an offensive military weapon.

THE WAR IN Bosnia gave rise to a catchphrase, “the CNN effect.” It meant that television in general, and CNN in particular, possessed the power to force governments, and especially the U.S. government, to pay attention to particular issues or crises; priorities and even policy could be set by klieg lights. And, while this was true to an extent, it was nonetheless exaggerated. Tenacious re-

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porting from Bosnia by Amanpour (and many other correspondents who did not work for CNN) certainly kept Bosnia at center stage even though the Clinton administration would have preferred to see it disappear. Yet military intervention occurred only after four long years of warfare, and, when it came, it stopped far short of reversing the ethnic cleansing that journalists had struggled to bring to light and in some cases died for.

Although Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic was an avid viewer of CNN and the BBC, he had nothing to fear from them. Thanks to his darkly brilliant manipulation of the domestic media in Serbia, all but a handful of Serbs were so sure they were doing no wrong in Bosnia (and, later, in Kosovo) that they didn't believe a word of what they heard on CNN and the BBC. To them, it was just anti-Serb propaganda.

The situation is far different in Iraq, where—unlike in Serbia—the domestic press is widely disbelieved, and CNN and the BBC (especially its short-wave Arabic service) are closely followed. The regime in Baghdad is brittle and weak; Colonel Vernon and his superiors know quite well that the violent house of cards that is the Baath regime could be toppled by irrefutable proof that Basra is free and that Saddam's days are numbered. Hence the prospect of CNN being shuttled to Basra by Blackhawk helicopter. Or, as Vernon explained to me, "War is not just tanks and armor. It's also psychological. Hearts and minds. The other guy's move is affected by what he sees happening or thinks is happening. I think the American defense secretary has a very good understanding of it. He has read the books. He said warfare is psychological. Spot on. Not many politicians get that."

The last decade has not been kind to journalists covering wars; from Bosnia to Rwanda to East Timor, they have been

targeted for death. One of the reasons this seemed unfair, and broke a moral code, is that journalists were not supposed to be treated as partisans of one government or another. In Bosnia, we did our jobs with what now seems, nostalgically, minimal cooperation from the military authorities on either side. But today, with American journalists going through widely publicized survival courses run by the U.S. Army, with so many of us embedded with GIs, and—the coup de grâce to our withering claim of neutrality—with the prospect of selected outlets being given privileged and controlled access so they can participate in a deadly game of psychological warfare aimed at toppling an enemy regime, the case for journalistic independence is becoming awfully difficult to sustain.

The fall of Basra would be a big story that, it goes without saying, should not be ignored because one side or another might benefit from its coverage. But the only reason CNN or the BBC would *need* a Blackhawk to Basra is because access may be denied to journalists traveling without a military escort. The roads, we have been told by Vernon and other military spokespeople in Kuwait, will likely be blocked until the situation is "benign"—a determination that will be made, of course, by the U.S. and British military. Some journalists will doubtless slip through, as a few did during the first Gulf war. But the surest way to the roof of the Basra Sheraton will likely be with a military escort, at a time of the military's choosing, broadcasting a message the military desires, for a duration the military wishes. After all, the generator that powers the transmission gear will probably belong to the military, as will, in all likelihood, the food and water that sustains the journalists.

Their story will be a great scoop. It may also be a great shame. ■

Campaign Journal Front Lines

BY RYAN LIZZA

POLITICAL OPERATIVES SLICE the presidential campaign into quarters, largely because fund-raising reports are due at the Federal Election Commission every three months. As if on cue, the war with Iraq is coming at the end of one quarter, as if the curtain is closing on the first act of the Democratic contest. After an intermission, during which the war itself is conducted, the curtain will rise again and the second, postwar phase will begin. The Democratic contenders are busily positioning themselves for that next phase.

When war became certain this week, all the top Democrats made statements. The loudest voice among them, somewhat surprisingly, was someone not even running for president. Tom Daschle, the Senate minority leader, punctuated his

rally-around-the-troops message with a personal shot at George W. Bush's diplomatic failure, a headline-making swipe that left several campaigns griping that he was picking the wrong fight at the wrong time. "Daschle's timing is terrible," an aide to one presidential candidate complains. "Daschle doesn't fight when he should and fights when he shouldn't."

Within the presidential field, the most aggressive efforts to jockey for postwar position probably come from Joe Lieberman and Howard Dean, speaking from opposite ends of the hawk-dove spectrum. Over the weekend, a videotaped speech Lieberman sent to the California Democratic Convention was loudly booed when he described his support for toppling Saddam Hussein—a not-infrequent experience for him among party activists in the campaign's early months. And, as usual, Dean's antiwar fire and brimstone stole the show at the same event. The question is whether this dynamic will continue after the war's conclusion.

Lieberman advisers are betting it won't. This, in their minds, is the moment when their man's support for the war will begin helping rather than hurting his candidacy. Lieberman was the fastest out of the gate this week in expressing his support for ending Saddam's regime. He was discussing the war Monday

morning on CNN—before the United States had even pulled its resolution from the Security Council. A few hours later, he drew a good-sized crowd of reporters in the Senate press gallery, where he reminded everyone that he has supported this policy for a dozen years, “long before George W. Bush became our president.” That afternoon, in a hotel ballroom with posters commemorating September 11 hanging on the walls, he spoke about the war before the International Association of Firefighters, who rose out of their chairs for five standing ovations. It was easily one of the best receptions Lieberman has gotten from a crowd this campaign season. “He wants to own this issue,” says an aide to another pro-war campaign.

For the moment, it seems to be working. One Lieberman aide this week nervously quoted a prewar poll that showed 68 percent of Democrats opposing the war. But, just as in 1991, polls in the final days before war appear to have flipped dramatically. After Bush’s ultimatum speech Monday, overnight polls showed that Democratic opposition to removing Saddam had fallen into the low forties. Needless to say, it is likely to drop further if the war goes well. Lieberman is trying to soak up a little of this rally-round-the-flag glow, which dovetails with his campaign’s belief that there are enough moderate and independent voters in the early primary states for him to win the nomination. “For all the talk that the primary electorate is generally more liberal, moderates can do well,” says a senior campaign adviser.

FOR DEAN, THE onset of war could have the opposite effect. “I’m well aware of what this morning’s polls show,” he told me the day after Bush’s first speech. “So now I’m in a minority of sixty-six to thirty-three, and that’s just the way it goes. I didn’t take this position for political reasons, and I’m not going to drop it for political reasons.” In canvassing opinions about the political implications of the war this week, aides to all four of Dean’s major rivals made the same argument: that all the energy fueling Dean’s surge in the first quarter came from the war. As long as the war is successful—a hugely important caveat—its conclusion will drain the momentum from Dean’s candidacy. “Dean was nowhere before the war,” says a top adviser to one candidate. “Once that hook is gone, he’ll stop gaining as much ground.” An official from another campaign concurs: “He essentially goes back to being the quirky health care candidate.”

Not surprisingly, Dean insists he does indeed have a second act. “There is a lot more to this than the war,” he says. In his view, the war may have been the hook that got people to first pay attention to him, but it was, well, him that got them to stick around. “The Iraq stuff was not the biggest issue,” he says of the cheers he received in California. “That gives me the entrée to get people to listen to me. What gets people cranked up is the straight-ahead style and the ‘let the chips fall where they may.’ It’s the McCain thing.” Dean has a habit, which some find annoying and others refreshing, of talking about himself and his campaign in this detached manner. He doesn’t just speak off-the-cuff; he reminds you that he’s the guy who speaks off-the-cuff and explains that his off-the-cuffness is

the reason people like him. “It’s not just the issues,” he says. “It’s the way I talk about them. The war is the divide between me and the other four folks. . . . But it’s not the war; it’s the straightforwardness.”

Dean is hoping he’ll be able to continue projecting this straightforwardness even after Iraq no longer dominates the Democratic race. He says he’s going to spend the war laying out his positions on health care, education, and other issues rather than attacking the president. “I won’t criticize the president during this time, but I will criticize the policy,” he says. “It will allow me in the next three or four weeks, as this war is going on—I hope it only lasts that long—to limit myself to positive remarks. . . . Instead of criticizing the president’s policy on health care, I’ll lay out my own. Instead of criticizing the president’s policy on education, I’ll lay out my own.” But, once the war is over, Dean may face other challenges. With his Iraq hook gone, at least one rival campaign will try to pull the plug on another source of Dean’s energy—the claim that he represents the “Democratic wing of the Democratic Party.” Expect an attack on Dean from the *left* on Social Security, the death penalty, guns, abortion, and federalism.

THEN THERE ARE the three candidates whose positions on the war fall somewhere in between those of Lieberman and Dean—Dick Gephardt, John Edwards, and John Kerry. All three voted for the congressional war resolution, but their positions leading up to the war will each be remembered a little differently. Gephardt has never had the hawkish record of Lieberman, and his reputation for flip-flopping—deserved or not—had some anticipating that he would go wobbling on Iraq. He never did. He spoke about the issue not like someone who was positioning himself for the general election but like a true convert, someone whose views on national security were truly changed by September 11, 2001. When war became imminent this week, most of the candidates mixed a little Bush-bashing with their statements of support for the troops; Gephardt played statesman. Throughout the debate, he has emphasized the risks of not confronting Saddam rather than Bush’s bumbling diplomatic tactics. “Nine-eleven was the ultimate wake-up call,” he repeated this week. “And, from then, we know that we face a terrible threat. We cannot have a weapon of mass destruction detonated in this country. It is unthinkable. We’ve got to do everything in our power to prevent that from happening.”

There has been enough buzz around Edwards for the last few years that first-quarter expectations for him were high. Yet most people following the Democratic campaign agree that Edwards never broke out of the pack. He never became the flavor of the month like Dean, or returned from political death like Gephardt, or emerged as the front-runner like Kerry. For what it’s worth, the most recent national poll confirms this observation, showing Edwards in single digits behind Gephardt, Kerry, and Lieberman, who are all bunched together at 15 to 20 percent each. Worse, South Carolina polls show Edwards in third place in the state he is supposed to win handily. Rival campaigns say he took the quarter off to do fund-raising. Still,

all that aside, as the major candidate with arguably the least foreign policy experience, in the months ahead he will be able to say that he took a politically risky stand on Iraq and, however cautiously, repeatedly defended it before the party's anti-war activists in Iowa and New Hampshire.

It is not likely that Kerry's performance in the prewar period will be similarly remembered. For a candidate whose *raison d'être* is that he is the only Democrat who can meet the post-September 11 threshold test on foreign policy experience, the impression remains—again, fair or not—that he never quite articulated a clear opinion on what to do about Iraq. I received a personal taste of this ambiguity in Des Moines last month when I met with two antiwar members of the Iowa state Senate, Jack Holveck and Jack Hatch. Holveck told me he wanted to support Kerry but couldn't: The senator's decision to support war even without U.N. authorization was forcing him toward Dean. Hatch told me the opposite: He was backing Kerry in part because he didn't think Kerry would back a unilateral war.

Kerry's final words on Iraq before hostilities commence offer a clue as to how two intelligent observers could come away with entirely different conclusions about where Kerry stands. On the brink of war, Kerry released a long and windy ten-paragraph statement about Bush's decision. Highlighted at the top is a seemingly unequivocal excerpt: "Even having botched the diplomacy, it is the duty of any President, in the final analysis, to defend this nation and dispel the security threats—threats both immediate and longer term—against it. Saddam Hussein has brought military action upon himself by refusing for twelve years to comply with the mandates of the United Nations. The brave and capable men and women of our armed forces and those who are with us will quickly, I know, remove him once and for all as a threat to his neighbors, to the world, and to his own people, and I support their doing so."

But wade through the other nine paragraphs, and you find that Kerry is "angered, saddened, and dismayed by the situation." The "Administration's handling of the run up to war with Iraq could not possibly have been more inept or self-defeating. . . . The Administration's indifference to diplomacy and the manner in which it has treated friend and foe alike over the past several months have left this country with vastly reduced influence throughout the world, made impossible the assembly of a broad, multinational effort against Saddam Hussein, and dramatically increased the costs of fulfilling our legitimate security obligations at home and around the world."

Kerry's angry denunciation of Bush's diplomatic failures is legitimate, as is his full-throated argument for war. But the two sentiments hail from opposite political and emotional poles, and Kerry's statement offers no clear thread to connect them. Some observers in rival campaigns think Kerry's occasional incoherence may derive from an overabundance of advisers. "That's what happens when you have six flacks," jokes one. Such anti-Kerry barbs were a constant during the first act of the primaries, and the Kerry campaign is surely already sick of them. But then again, they wouldn't be flying were Kerry not still, with the second act set to begin, the front-runner. ■

How Bush doomed inspections. Verify First

BY ROBERT WRIGHT

SOME BUSH ADMINISTRATION hawks have derived a simple moral from America's recent diplomatic fiasco: You shouldn't use the United Nations to pursue vital strategic goals. But the facts of the case suggest different lessons: You shouldn't use the United Nations in such a blatantly dishonest way as to insult the intelligence of the world; and you shouldn't exhibit so little tactical imagination that a nation such as France finds it easy to frustrate you; and you should especially avoid these mistakes when, as in this case, you could have used the United Nations to reach all of your essential goals.

U.N. Resolution 1441, passed on November 8, 2002, demanded that Saddam Hussein surrender any weapons of mass destruction and established an "enhanced inspection regime." Once Saddam declared that he had no such weapons, the ball seemed to be in the international community's court: U.N. inspectors would try to prove he was lying, and, until they did, war would be put on hold. It was thus a surprise to many observers when the Bush administration started agitating for war even though inspectors had been allowed to go wherever they wanted but hadn't yet found anything.

The Bush administration now claims that these surprised observers misunderstood from the get-go—that in fact inspectors were never intended to actually uncover Saddam's hidden weapons. "The inspectors were never sent there to be detectives," said Condoleezza Rice. "They were sent there to verify his disarmament." But, if inspectors weren't meant to be detectives, then why did 1441 give them detective powers? Why did it explicitly authorize surprise inspections of presidential palaces? Why did it empower inspectors to take weapons scientists and their families outside of Iraq for interrogation?

The fact is that the inspectors' detective function had been built into 1441 by the United States itself. The resolution called for Saddam to make an "accurate, full, and complete declaration" of weapons of mass destruction. But the Bush administration knew it wouldn't trust Saddam's declaration to be complete even if he owned up to having some weapons of mass destruction. So it insisted on making inspectors so powerful that they could find out whether he was holding anything back. Disarmament verification and detective work, far from being the polar opposites that Rice implies, were one and the same from the beginning.

But, after weeks of inspections that found no smoking gun, the administration, bent on invading Iraq by early spring, started floating the "inspectors aren't detectives" line. It was repeated so often—by Rice, Colin Powell, Ari Fleischer, and a boatload of Republican talking heads—that it became a kind

of background noise, its grating incoherence no doubt annoying more than one foreign diplomat.

Like it or not, the Bush administration, by going through the United Nations, had entered the realm of international law. And international law, like national law, demands proof of wrongdoing as a prerequisite for punishment. You never hear a district attorney begin an opening argument by saying, "We all know the defendant is guilty, so let's give him a few minutes to confess, and then, regardless of whether he does, let's get on with the punishment." And you're not supposed to hear the equivalent at the Security Council. But much of President Bush's rhetoric has sounded more or less like that.

At times Bush seemed to acknowledge that he bore the burden of proof. He sent Powell before the Security Council with what both men considered conclusive evidence. And most Americans (including me) found some of it compelling—most notably wiretaps that seemed to indicate Iraqis were shuffling around banned items as inspections neared. Still, it wasn't a slam-dunk case. The rough domestic equivalent—a murder case in which no weapon or body has been found and in which damning wiretaps could be cast into doubt by a sufficiently smooth attorney—might not yield a guilty verdict.

You can argue that the Security Council shouldn't be as hamstrung by evidentiary doubts as an American jury. And, in any case, such doubts aren't what led the now-famous French showoff Dominique de Villepin to block U.N. authorization of war; de Villepin seems allergic to "ultimatums" no matter how justified they are. Still, legally speaking, de Villepin's position was at least arguably defensible. Moreover, he was in a sense offering the United States a great opportunity. If the Bush team had responded adroitly to the tactical obstacle he posed, it could have outmaneuvered him and wound up ousting Saddam with less international grief than will result from the war that at this writing seems imminent.

After all, any war launched on the basis of Powell's evidence alone has a major *p.r.* problem: Trusting the evidence requires trusting the United States, and that's not a common practice throughout the Muslim world, where it is most important that a war in Iraq be seen as justified. Powell compounded this problem by a) sticking doggedly to a dubious interpretation of the famous "aluminum tubes" that Iraq had ordered (and never received); b) saying two satellite pictures showed that Iraqis removed chemical weapons from a site "on the twenty-second of December as the U.N. inspection team is arriving"—when in fact the picture showing Iraqi activity at the site was taken weeks earlier (and was ambiguous anyway, according to U.N. analysts); and c) touting a British intelligence report that turned out to have been largely plagiarized (not to be confused with documents that the Anglo-American team had earlier offered as proof of an Iraqi nuclear program, documents that turned out to have been forged).

In light of these screwups, and the preexisting mistrust of the United States, Powell's evidence simply didn't qualify as a smoking gun in the court of world (as opposed to American) opinion. The Security Council's refusal to authorize a war at that point was a useful reminder of this fact—and of the corol-

lary that evidence unearthed by U.N. inspectors in the presence of TV cameras would be a much better premise for war.

Inspections almost certainly could have produced such a smoking gun if Bush had given them months more to work and had strengthened them. He could have massively expanded the inspection team and proposed a hard-nosed Security Council resolution defining specific acts of noncooperation as automatic triggers for war. (For example, the Iraqi government would have to deliver all weapons scientists for multi-day interrogations—and refusal by any of them to answer any germane question might even itself be defined as noncooperation.) Failure to meet specific disclosure benchmarks—documenting the supposed destruction of anthrax by such-and-such a date—could also have been defined as automatic triggers for war. The Bush administration often claimed vaguely that Iraq was withholding the full cooperation demanded by Resolution 1441, but Bush never broke this assertion down into clear-cut tests, as some Security Council members advocated.

This new resolution, unlike 1441, would have defined the thresholds for war precisely and left no doubt that further Security Council authorization of war was unnecessary. Obviously, the French wouldn't have loved this idea. But Bush, by offering to hold off on war in exchange for this "automaticity," could have put them in an awkward position: By vetoing the resolution, France would be starting a war. And that would have been bad for de Villepin's image, not to mention Jacques Chirac's. (Note how flexible Chirac started sounding this week, on the eve of war, suddenly suggesting that a mere one-month delay might be enough to satisfy him.) Besides, putting war off would have been a big concession on Bush's part, allowing France to validly claim a major diplomatic victory.

In any event, even if France had vetoed the resolution, the administration could have embarked on war in better geopolitical shape than it finds itself in now. Bush would have been seen as earnestly trying to make inspections work, rather than constantly trying to short-circuit them.

SO WHY DIDN'T the administration try such a resolution? Lots of reasons, but the biggest one may have been fear of success. From the beginning, Bush wanted not just disarmament but regime change, and he worried that the former would preclude the latter; if inspectors actually found weapons, the world would insist on giving them time to find more weapons, *ad infinitum*. (Indeed, Bush seems to have signed onto Resolution 1441 on the assumption that Saddam wouldn't let inspectors into Iraq.)

My own view is that once inspectors found a smoking gun, the case for war would have become stronger, not weaker. You can't expect inspections to uncover every last canister of nerve gas and every vial of anthrax, so, once we had proved Saddam to be hiding something, we could have justifiably demanded that he abdicate and that Iraq accept U.N. governance for the duration of a good housecleaning. Saddam might have refused, causing a war, but then at least we'd be fighting someone who had been proved guilty beyond the shadow of a doubt.

What's more, in making inspections succeed, we would have shown that the United Nations can work as an instrument of coercive multilateralism. That would have been a crucial accomplishment, assuming that the United States doesn't plan to invade every country it suspects of making biological or nuclear weapons.

Resolution 1441, like many products of intensive negotiation, is an ambiguous document. It allowed France to plausibly claim that Iraq shouldn't be invaded because it hadn't been proved beyond doubt to possess the weapons of mass destruction that were the crux of the whole matter—even though France, like the United States, presumably believes that the weapons are there somewhere. The resolution also allowed the United States to plausibly claim that Iraq, by failing to cooperate fully and immediately, was subject to invasion—even though Iraq cooperated with inspectors in essential respects and much more fully than Bush had expected.

Still, it was the United States, more than France, that departed from what had initially been the consensus interpretation of Resolution 1441: If Saddam agreed to play the game—made his declaration and then let inspectors try to prove him a liar—punishment would await the inspectors' discovery of a smoking gun. And the reason the United States abandoned the spirit of 1441 was that its claim to be seeking mere disarmament and not war or even regime change (a claim that was "operative," as Richard Nixon's spokesman used to say, during much of the winter) was never really true.

In any event, the main question now isn't whether the United States or France was on stronger legal ground or which nation was guilty of greater perfidy. The question is whether the United Nations offers an institutional framework through which the United States can pursue valid goals—such as disarming and sometimes even deposing regimes that have weapons of mass destruction in violation of international law—more effectively than it can pursue them outside the United Nations. The answer is that, in this case, it almost certainly could have.

Even in the eyes of its champions, the United Nations isn't some transcendent power that can always be counted on to work effectively and justly. It is an organization of nations. As with any political body, its members try to use it for their self-interest, and, if enough powerful members can find a zone of overlapping self-interest, the body can work pretty well, pretty often. But, if the leader of the strongest member nation doesn't truly want the organization to work, then it probably won't.

The tragedy is that a sufficiently creative president could have made the organization serve America's interests and at the same time could have prepared the ground for repeating the exercise in the future. Instead, confronted with France's ambition of geo-poetic dominance, Bush displayed the crude single-mindedness and petty nationalism that has led the United States to its current status as least-popular polity in the known universe. John F. Kennedy used to say, "Don't get mad—get even." But, when France had the audacity to complicate America's plans, the Bush administration just got mad. ■

The Security Council myth. Power Strip

BY JONATHAN CHAIT

WHEN WAR WITH IRAQ IS complete, the lasting accusation against President George W. Bush is probably not going to be that he slaughtered innocent Iraqis or sacrificed American soldiers for cheap oil. It will be

that, by going to war without express permission from the United Nations, he destroyed the rules and institutions of international order. The primary fury against this war is rooted in the sense that Bush has not merely made a tactical mistake by alienating needed allies, as some critics have charged, but has violated basic norms of international behavior. "There is a principle here, a basic principle," Vladimir P. Lukin, former Russian ambassador to the United States, asserted this month, "that, if someone tries to wage war on their own account, without other states, without an international mandate, it means all the world is confusion and a wild jungle."

This critique assumes that Bush's war has torn apart something well-established. "We are committed to the United Nations *remaining* [emphasis added] at the center of the international order," a European Union declaration stated four weeks ago. "We recognize that the primary responsibility for dealing with Iraqi disarmament lies with the Security Council." And, while this is primarily a non-American—and, especially, a European—notion, it has seeped into American liberal opinion as well. A recent *New York Times* editorial warned that the rupture in the Security Council "could lead to a serious, possibly fatal, breakdown in the system of collective security that was fashioned in the waning days of World War II, a system that finally seemed to be reaching its potential in the years since the end of the cold war." The fault lines in the post-Saddam Hussein U.S. foreign policy debate are already clear: Liberals will insist that the United States return to an orderly world, where the legal and moral authority to make war—except in cases of imminent humanitarian disaster or self-defense—rests with the United Nations, or, more precisely, the Security Council. What they fail to realize is that such a world never actually existed.

AS EVERYBODY KNOWS, the United Nations was founded in the idealistic hope that it could "save succeeding generations from the scourge of war." But, despite its many achievements, the United Nations has failed to establish a monopoly on the use of force. Michael J. Glennon, a professor of international law at Tufts University's Fletcher School, points out that, since the end of World War II, there have been more than

100 interstate conflicts without U.N. approval. By contrast, while the United Nations has approved several interstate peacekeeping missions—ranging from marginally effective to outright disastrous—it has only sanctioned two interstate wars: Korea in 1950 and the Persian Gulf in 1990. (The former was a fluke: The Soviet Union would have exercised its Security Council veto but was boycotting over the exclusion of Communist China.) And the world grew accustomed to this state of affairs. When the United States went to war in Vietnam or Grenada, or the Soviet Union in Afghanistan or Czechoslovakia, nobody complained about the lack of U.N. authorization.

Why, then, in the 1990s did the world begin to expect the United Nations would be obeyed? First, the cold war ended. It was understood that the superpower rivalry had shunted the United Nations to the margins of world affairs. Now, at last, the organization could fulfill its intended mission. Then, in 1990, the United Nations joined together to support the Gulf war. This was just the sort of instance for which the United Nations had been designed: nations great and small banding together to repel a clear-cut case of aggression. The three subsequent U.S. military excursions—in Somalia, Haiti, and Bosnia—all fell under the U.N.'s auspices. The assumption was that, with the cold war over, U.S. military intervention would follow this pattern from then on.

The first President Bush fed this hope by promising a “new world order.” The Clinton administration likewise promised a foreign policy of “assertive multilateralism.” The internationalist euphoria of the early '90s is reflected in a speech given by U.N. Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar in the fall of 1991. When he started in his position, in 1982, Pérez de Cuéllar glumly admitted in a report that the Security Council was “unable to take decisive action to resolve international conflicts.” Nine years later, he rejoiced in the U.N.'s “renaissance,” concluding, “The effectiveness of the United Nations can no longer be in doubt.”

The U.N.'s newfound power, though, was based upon the historical aberration of the '90s. The cold war had ended, and nothing had risen up as a challenge to this new, U.S.-dominated, unipolar world. And so there were a series of wars in which the U.S. position encountered no real opposition from Russia, China, or Western Europe. This does not mean the United States subordinated its warmaking authority to the approval of the Security Council; it was the other way around. And yet internationalists and some liberals fallaciously assumed that, because the United States *did* take action with U.N. approval, it would not have taken action in those instances had the United Nations *not* approved.

Consider the Gulf war, usually considered the paradigmatic U.N. operation. President George H.W. Bush admitted in a press conference beforehand that he would drive Saddam out of Kuwait even without the Security Council's permission. Lawrence Eagleburger, Bush père's deputy secretary of state, foreshadowed the sentiments of the current Bush administration when he declared, “It is absolutely essential that the U.S.—collectively if possible but individually if necessary—

not only put a stop to this aggression but roll it back.” And the first President Bush was perfectly willing to steamroll his fellow Security Council members. As Stanley Meisler reports in *United Nations: The First Fifty Years*, in the midst of the bombing campaign that the Soviets proposed, and Pérez de Cuéllar enthusiastically promoted, a face-saving plan was created for Saddam to withdraw from Kuwait after a cease-fire. But, as Meisler writes, “Bush preempted any U.N. consideration of the plan by proclaiming an ultimatum to Saddam Hussein to start leaving Kuwait City within twenty-four hours or face annihilation.” After the war, critics on the left derided Bush's “new world order” as a ploy to turn the United Nations into an American puppet.

THE FANTASY THAT George W. Bush has befouled the multilateral paradise he inherited also conveniently disregards the fact that his predecessor flouted the Security Council as well. At first, it is true, the new Clintonites appeared reluctant to cross international opinion. But, wearying of Europe's failure to halt the slaughter in Bosnia, they adopted a new strategy that echoed Eagleburger's: “Multilateral when we can, unilateral when we must.” After British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook complained that his lawyers told him intervention against Serbia would violate international law, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright replied, “Get new lawyers.” Clinton proceeded, without Security Council approval, to bomb Iraq in 1998 for its failure to cooperate with weapons inspectors and to land ground troops in Kosovo in 1999, angering Russia in the latter instance and both France and Russia in the former. (At the time, Republicans seized upon the allies' anger as evidence of Clinton's failure. In 1999, in his first major foreign policy address as a candidate, the younger Bush pointedly stated, “We have partners, not satellites,” and promised “more American consultation.”)

This is not to say Bush's foreign policy is identical to Clinton's in its regard for supranational institutions. But the atmosphere of partisan distrust that pervades Washington has blown the differences out of proportion. The idea that the president must obtain permission from the Security Council before launching a war, now regarded by some Democrats as a bedrock principle, would have struck most of them as alien as recently as a year and a half ago. An essay by Council on Foreign Relations fellow Stewart Patrick in *World Policy Journal*, published in the fall of 2001, lamented that the notion that the United States “cannot afford to be hamstrung by global rules and institutions... enjoys bipartisan support.”

The myth that Bush has struck a historic blow against the U.N.'s authority is furthered by conservatives who exult in its demise. “THE UNITED NATIONS IMPLODES,” rejoiced a recent *Weekly Standard* cover. But those who celebrate Bush's flouting of the Security Council and those who mourn it share the same basic misapprehension: that the United Nations ever had the authority to stop the United States in the first place. ■

Chamchamal Dispatch Homecoming

BY ELIZABETH RUBIN

THERE'S A STORY in the Koran called "The Cave Dwellers." It's a legend about a city rank with thieves and kidnappers and rotten sorts. A small group of people refused to accept the tyranny and went to a cave to complain to God. Three hundred years later, they awoke and went to their city to purchase some food. A shopkeeper said, "Where have you been? It's three hundred years since this money was changed." As the story goes, God had laid them to sleep to protect them from attackers.

Northern Iraq could use such protection. Families are bundling themselves into pickups, long-haul lorries, World War II motorcycle sidecars and heading far into the mountains and borders in case Saddam Hussein fires chemical weapons into the towns. There are also thousands like the cave dwellers who've been biding their time until a miracle falls from the sky to get them back to their homes across the thirty-sixth parallel, whether those homes are waiting for them or not.

The Badr Brigade of Shia Arabs intends to take advantage of those bombs from the sky and go home after their long exile in Iran. On Saturday, the Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI), headed by Ayatollah Al Bakr Hakim, composed of Iraqi Shia, and backed by Iran, decided to show its military prowess outside Darbandikhan in the mountains near Iran. We followed our SCIRI guide across a bridge over a rushing green river to a wild valley of rock ridges and wind-whipped pine trees. Soldiers set up chairs on a bluff for their military leader and guest, Abdul Aziz Hakim (he usually stays at home in Tehran), the brother of Ayatollah Al Bakr Hakim, and for the officers and guests. I'd met Abdul Aziz in February in Tehran, where he told me the story of his family's exile from southern Iraq. His father, Ayatollah Mohsen Hakim, had a great following among the Shia of Iraq, and from its first days, the Baath Party targeted the Hakim family. Abdul Aziz had nine brothers; in 1983, five of them were killed by Saddam along with 50 other relatives; 50 are still missing in Iraq's prisons, including one of his remaining brothers.

These days, there's an alliance of exigency among the Iraqi opposition and with the United States, but SCIRI is perhaps the least comfortable member of that ad hoc coalition. Abdul Aziz talked about how the United States allowed Saddam's tanks to move against his people during the uprising George Bush senior instigated against Saddam after the Gulf war. "We even

heard that Americans provided fuel to the Republican Guard and allowed the helicopters to move and shoot us," he said. The Badr Brigade, as SCIRI's militia is called, is a secretive bunch trained and based in Iran or underground in Iraq. Everyone knows SCIRI is, in effect, Tehran's arm into Iraq. Yet it is one of the largest, most organized forces opposing Saddam, and the Americans are dealing with it for now.

In the distance, squadrons of soldiers came marching out from between two small mountains toward their leader. An officer stood on the bluff chanting from a small Koran. The wind washed through the microphone, sending screeches echoing across the valley. A second officer stepped up. "The Badr forces will fight alongside the *peshmerga* [Kurdish fighters] to topple the Iraqi dictatorship," he shouted. "God will protect them and give them victory." Abdul Aziz stood up, raising his palm in blessing as the militia, grunting and shouting, paraded before him: the machine-gun battalion; the rifle battalion; the rocket-propelled grenade-launcher battalion; and the communications battalion, with their radios on their backs, antennae flapping with the gusts. "We are coming toward you Hussein; we are tired of oppression," the soldiers chimed.

There were only about 900 soldiers on parade, and I asked one if there were more. He said these were just the Imam Ali unit, named for the son-in-law of the Prophet Mohammed; there are others, in Iran and Iraq—some say as many as 15,000 all told. Small jeeps rolled by, showing off Katyusha rocket launchers, 106-millimeter artillery, and anti-aircraft guns. The soldier was reluctant to say much, but he told me he'd come from Baghdad a week ago and had been in The Badr Brigade, slipping in and out of Iraq from Iran, for 15 years. He was a Shia from the south and a follower of Abdul Aziz. One of his brothers was hanged and another imprisoned because they were religious, he said. "My wife is also in prison for the last two years because of me," he said and then rushed off.

The troops sat down in a field across the road from Abdul Aziz. Perhaps pumped up by the cameras, by Abdul Aziz's presence, by the nearness of war, martyrdom, and home, men rose up and recited prayers and vows scrawled on crumpled paper. Their words incited the throng of men to raise their rifles, jump up, and cry for their hometowns. They cried, "Let Saddam tell his forces that the forces of Said Hakim are ready to shoot and kill." The men were becoming uncontrollably rowdy. The officers desperately ordered them to "stop, stop, stop everything." But they would not stop. Abdul Aziz gave a speech, then walked down the bluff, crossed the road in his black robes and turban, and was swallowed into an adoring crowd of men in their late thirties, forties, fifties gearing up for battle. The officers still had no control.

ON MONDAY, THE day after the Azores meeting brought no second U.N. resolution, "the color of war," as the locals say, had occupied the city of Chamchamal, south of Sulaymaniya and just three kilometers from Iraqi army positions. Families were packing up trucks with children, women, mattresses, satellite

Elizabeth Rubin covered the war in Afghanistan for THE NEW REPUBLIC.

dishes, rugs. But there was no panic, rather there was laughter, an attitude of *we've been through this before*. As the city emptied of families, it filled with *peshmerga* and security guards with Kalashnikovs and machine guns who were spilling out of the normally calm Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) security compound. A man in a green suit on the grass inside the compound gates asked if he could talk to me. His wife, he said, traveled three days ago with his one-year-old daughter to Kirkuk to visit their friends and relatives, and she hasn't been able to get out. "They let out only fifty cars a day, and she was in the fifty-first," he said, and then tears spilled out of his eyes. He used to live in Kirkuk, where he owned three shops and two houses. They were confiscated in Saddam's Arabization campaign, and he hasn't been back since 1991. He lives in a tiny room in Chamchamal with eight children. I asked him foolishly if he wanted to go back to Kirkuk, and he said, "Is there anyone not wanting to go back to his home?" Then he said, "Thank you for listening to me. There are thousands like me. I—" and he clasped his hands over his ears, squeezing his head, his face reddening, shaking, crying, and walked away.

In the town center, at Dove Square, named after the centerpiece sculpture of two doves on a globe, blue and white buses disgorged women with soft silk scarfs tied around their heads, arriving from Kirkuk. "The Republican Guards told us if anyone leaves their house, they will Arabize it. So some of our men stayed behind," said one young woman. "But even the Arabs are getting out of Kirkuk. They're afraid of Saddam, afraid of American bombs. It'll be nearly empty soon." A street kid tugged on my jacket. "Come this way. He just came from Kirkuk," he said, taking me over to a young man named Ribwar Ali and pulling up his polo shirt. A scar, flat and mottled like a fried omelet, stretched across his distended abdomen. We gave him a cup of tea. He showed me the scar on his neck and the bone extending out of his elbow. He said he was 24, released from Saddam's prison a few months ago after ten years. He was tortured for refusing to confess to being a secret Kurdish agent. "They stuck a long iron rod into my waist and abdomen, and then I had internal bleeding. They left me for dead but my friends in the prison took care of me," he said flatly. "Every family has a victim, and I'm sure even the women and children will go out to take revenge against anyone who tortured the people," he said. "But we will never fight the ordinary soldiers, only the security and rear guards." He wanted to know if I was a doctor and could fix him. Someone told him, "No, she's a journalist." "So then why did she want to talk to me?" he asked.

An elderly barrel of a man trundled up on his cane and said, "Tell her there's no need for asking questions and filming, we are ready to fuck Saddam's mother and his sister. We are so tired of this bloodthirsty dictator." The gathering crowd of young men shouted, "Bravo Mister Nasser," "Excellent words," "Excellent speech."

We followed a convoy of yellow and orange Toyotas, packed with belongings and families, east out of town and climbed up into the eastern reddening mountains. At a rusted checkpoint,

we passed some time with the *peshmerga* there, who must have had 600 years worth of stories between them. A chubby farmer in baggy pants who serves with the fighters came forward and told me that not long ago he was plowing his land when he saw three Iraqi army soldiers moving toward him. "They told us, 'Don't be afraid, we are hungry and coming for food.' ... They wanted to know when there'd be war and said they'd surrender as soon as it started." They also invited him for tea at their post whenever their officer was not on duty.

A tall, solid man with dark eyes, wearing a gray woolen jumpsuit and a GI Joe camouflage cap, stepped forward. He has two houses occupied by Arabs in Dooz Qormatu, he said. That's the old Turkish-Kurdish name for Tikrit. "It's twenty-three years that in my dreams I'm going back to my home."

Home. Everyone's dreaming of home. But what will be wrought by the uncontrollable Shia soldiers and the Kurds rushing back to villages inside Iraq, where their houses and farmland were handed over to Arabs? "The world saw with their eyes what we did to secret agents through satellite TV," said the man from Tikrit. And another chimed in, "After taking their eyes out, putting mud in their noses, breaking their teeth, we will do worse than we did in 1991."

TUESDAY MORNING, I drove to Sangaw, a town about 30 kilometers from the front lines through which caravans of Kurds were traveling, climbing through sliced rock ridges, en route to the safety of the mountain heights. In the back of a small Toyota pickup, a girl in a blue velvet dress was blowing bubbles. Tractors hauled covered wagons, some of them with dozens of people tumbling around inside.

On the side of the road, above a deep gorge, we came across 50 people who could have been on a picnic, kids running around with a soccer ball, women frying eggs, men talking and smoking. They hadn't slept all night waiting for Al Jazeera to broadcast their fate. At about 5 a.m., shortly after George W. Bush wrapped up his address with his 48-hour ultimatum to Saddam, they packed themselves and their belongings into two huge, yellow Scania trucks and set out from Chamchamal in the dark, the children sick and crying and, some of them, sleeping. "As soon as Bush finished his address to the world, we left because it was war," said Omar Ali Sharif, the 62-year-old father of "many, many." "We've seen this before. Saddam is a tyrant. More than a thousand of my relatives disappeared in 1988," during the Anfal extermination campaign against the Kurds. This was the tenth time, he thought, that he'd packed up his belongings and fled the town. "At least here, the chemicals can't reach us," said his relative Fakradin, a judge's assistant in Chamchamal. His father-in-law, a crinkly old man in a turban, knelt down on a small, red prayer mat and began to pray. Fakradin seemed embarrassed. "We don't pray," he said quickly. "We are not Islamists. We are not terrorists. We are civilized." He asked me again to make sure I didn't say they were Islamists because otherwise Americans might bomb his family camping up in the mountains.

WEDNESDAY MORNING AND Chamchamal is a boarded-up ghost town. Yesterday's bustling security compound is empty but for a few men, none of whom have gas masks. All the action is down at the checkpoint going to Kirkuk, a five-minute drive away. There, a stream of men and women in twos and threes share the burden of bags on the hour-long walk out of Kirkuk. The Iraqis, they say, have stopped all cars from crossing.

Four men, much older than the rest, cross the checkpoint dressed in suits. There's something different about them and their gray bags. I stop the tallest, whose gray suit complements a charcoal turtleneck, graying hair, and a bushy mustache. He is Mohammad Ahmad Merad, a Kurd of the Jaff family tribe, and he tells me that he was a prisoner of war in an Iranian prison for the last 20 years. His release, he says, was a total surprise. Last week, an agreement was made between Iraq and Iran, and he was transported from detention camp to detention camp and crossed the border with 349 other prisoners, passing on their way the Iranian prisoners going to their homes in the opposite direction. He was given the gray suit and Iraqi dinars by Saddam's government as a token of his heroism.

A conscript soldier in the Iraqi army, Mohammad had been captured at the age of 29 in 1982 after the Iraqi army invaded Iran and was occupying Kermanshah, a Kurdish region in Iran. The Iranian army counterattacked, and he was rounded up with 2,178 others. His speech is slow and slurry—a relic of long days of torture. He imagined that when the war was over he'd be freed, but the Iranians kept him locked up as a bargaining chip with Iraq. His first year was torture and solitary confinement, but later, he says, the guards were good to him. Still, from 1987 until 2000, they had no televisions and no newspapers. How did he occupy himself? "Patience." And with his friends, the three other men standing with him, dazed, patient, anxious, at the Chamchamal checkpoint. "We divided up our work like we ran a restaurant," Mohammad says. "One cooked beans, the other rice, and the other washed the dishes."

Someone asks him about the Red Cross. He was saddened and confused, he says, by the Red Cross. They never interviewed or visited him. "The jails were filled with prisoners from the war, but the Red Cross never arrived. I was so angry." We go toward the block post where he has to register with the Kurds who control the territory. "I feel like I have a new life, as if I were just born and have come from a graveyard," he says smiling; his brow rises, six, seven furrows. He's only 49. He looks a little lost. Where will he go now? He smiles. He doesn't know if there's a home waiting for him. The drama awaits him down the long road snaking through the fog and muddy hills between Chamchamal and Sulaymaniya. Mohammad has had no contact with his wife and six children since he was captured. They may think he died. His wife could be remarried. His family may have been killed in the Anfal. They may have moved to Germany or the United States. No one, in fact, knows he's coming home.

We drive to Mohammad's former home on the outskirts of Sulaymaniya. "I'll go to the market to buy some oranges," he says. "I don't want to surprise them." He says he knew one

prisoner, a Kurd, who was released, and, when his wife saw him, she went into cardiac arrest from the shock. So his prison-mate, Akram, will go warn his wife—if she's there—that Mohammad is alive and in the street. Akram will bring her a black stone that Mohammad takes out of his pocket on which he'd inscribed his son's name while in prison.

Akram runs down the dirt road like a giddy child. A few minutes pass, and Akram skulks back, head down, despondent. "They left yesterday evening. We don't know where they went." Soon a crowd gathers to see this skinny stranger. Old women and young men are pulling Mohammad—come in for tea, lunch. "I know you," says one. "We are relatives." He says he must move on. More information arrives from the crowd. The family has gone picnicking in Darbandikhan, where I'd seen the Shia Arabs on military parade a few days earlier. No, not picnicking, evacuated, says another. We race around the mountain lake and the domed rocks, pull into Darbandikhan. No time to stop. Mohammad is so anxious he can't think, and we bound along the back roads, out into the farmlands. A friend of Mohammad who has guided us here carries the news up the steps and into the house. A tall, thin, dark-haired woman sees Mohammad and shouts and wraps her arms around him. It's his cousin. He takes slow steps up the stone path and sees his wife, a short woman in a green dress.

"I pray to God for I found you. I thought he was dead. It's a miracle," his cousin says.

"Why are you crying? You should be happy and cheer up," he says to his wife, who is wailing softly.

"It's a miracle."

Then he sees his youngest daughter, Shehen, now a grown woman. She was three months in her mother's womb when he went off to war. She drops against the wall, beating the ground with her fists and legs. He's a stranger, not her father. "I have seen so many dreams. I'm afraid it's not true," she says.

Mohammad looks at a two-year-old racing around shouting. "Who is this child? I don't know her." "It's Sergula's child." Sergula is his 26-year-old daughter, who was a little girl the last time he saw her. "Oh no," Mohammad says laughing. "Who did you marry?"

Everyone is crying. One of the older women says, "Go out and cheer everyone up; tell them your uncle is back." The neighbors flood the house for hours. Some were in the army with him; others, neighbors. There are 15 little children and 20 adults in the house now. Shehen, who feared him only moments before, sits under his arm. A nephew tells of Mohammad's son, now in the mountains with the *peshmerga*. Mohammad hates war. Two of his brothers were assassinated as *peshmerga*. Another was hanged. His daughter says, "We know the U.S. isn't fighting Saddam for the Kurds. It's for oil."

But soon Mohammad and his wife begin to laugh and argue as if little time has passed. He wants to stay here in the country. Now that she has a man back, she wants to go to the big town of Sulaymaniya. They joke about getting Mohammad another wife. She says she'll kick anyone new out of the house. But then she changes her mind, "If we're not killed by chemical weapons, we'll talk about another wife tomorrow morning." ■

Will black gold stymie democracy in Iraq?

Blood for Oil

BY JOHN B. JUDIS

ASK PESSIMISTS WHY Iraq will never be a democracy, and they most often cite its ethnic and religious divisions. A post-Saddam Hussein Iraq, they warn, could devolve into an Arab Yugoslavia, with open warfare between the Sunnis, Shia, and Kurds, and with Iran, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia taking sides. Optimists like THE NEW REPUBLIC's Lawrence F. Kaplan respond that a federation could manage these divisions. Except that federations don't work well in countries where mineral wealth is concentrated in potentially secessionist regions, as the experiences of Nigeria, Sierra Leone, and the former Belgian Congo attest. And most of Iraq's oil lies away from Baghdad, near the Kurdish North and in the Shia South.

But there's another—potentially greater—obstacle to democracy that gets much less attention, perhaps because American policymakers mistakenly see it as an advantage rather than a serious problem. And that is oil itself. As Vice President Dick Cheney put it last weekend, "This is not a nation without resources, and, when it comes time to rebuild and to make the kinds of investments that are going to be required to give them a shot at achieving a truly representative government, . . . Iraq starts with significant advantages." On its face, Cheney's statement simply echoes Seymour Martin Lipset's famous adage: "The more well-to-do a nation, the greater its chances to sustain democracy." But, according to political scientists and economic historians, oil states are the exception that prove Lipset's rule: Oil wealth actually hinders, rather than helps, a country's transition to democracy. *Newsweek* columnist Fareed Zakaria makes this argument in his important new book, *The Future of Freedom*. If he and the academics are correct, American postwar planners are naive in thinking that oil will facilitate democracy in Iraq. Rather, they will have to figure out how to avoid the authoritarian fate that has befallen almost every other nation that has become dependent on oil.

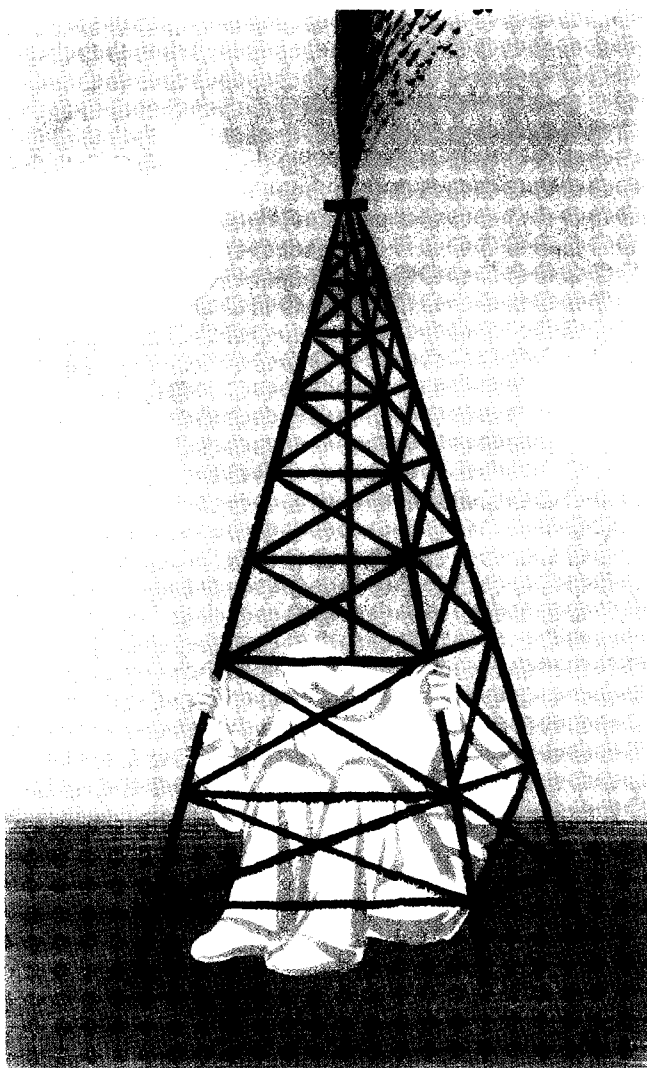
DEMOCRACY IS BASED, above all, on the separation of civil society from the state. It depends on the existence of an independent realm of social and economic power, protected from arbitrary state power by the rule of law. The components of civil society include what Tocqueville called "civil and political associations"—social clubs, churches, charitable organizations, and political parties—but the most important are private businesses and unions organized in a competitive, capi-

talist marketplace. It is these institutions—not the formal apparatus of elections—that guarantee popular self-rule by erecting a barrier against lawless government. Without these underpinnings, individuals and groups are absorbed into the all-powerful state, as they were under communist and fascist rule, and still are under many of today's authoritarian regimes. Elections become merely staged rituals.

In the United States, democracy arose largely through the spread of entrepreneurial capitalism in the early nineteenth century, the product of the small farmers and urban craftsmen whom Thomas Jefferson and Andrew Jackson celebrated. In Great Britain, democracy grew out of the millennial struggles among the king, landed aristocracy, business, and, finally, labor—from the Magna Carta to the Glorious Revolution to the electoral-reform laws of the nineteenth and early twentieth century. The struggle for liberty, as Zakaria puts it, preceded democracy. In continental Europe, labor's rise spurred an initial move toward democracy, but it took World War II to sever the link between big business and the state and military that had made fascism possible. In countries such as South Korea and Taiwan today, independent labor, business, and professional organizations are allowing democracy to emerge tentatively from what were once command economies.

It is no coincidence that this transition has not happened in countries with massive oil wealth. Today, Norway is the only full-fledged democracy that depends primarily on oil for its export income. But Norway was already a democracy with an independent civil society when it found oil in the North Sea in the 1960s. The rest of the world's oil nations had authoritarian regimes before they struck black gold. Many of them, including Iraq, Kuwait, and Algeria, were colonial possessions. Some, such as Iraq and Libya, were arbitrarily created by their European conquerors out of separate provinces. Most either already had monarchical traditions of rule or had them imposed on tribal, patrimonial systems by their colonial overseers. The British, for instance, imposed a king on the newly created Iraq in 1921.

Oil wealth didn't undermine these authoritarian structures; it strengthened them. After the colonial powers departed at the end of World War II, oil provided the newly independent governments of the Middle East a veritable windfall—either through concessions or later through outright ownership of their country's oil facilities. With their new income, the states' kings, emirs, and sheiks were no longer dependent on their countries' merchants or workers for tax income. They could finance their governments entirely out of oil revenues. They



In the Middle East, oil wealth has provided a ruinous shortcut around the centuries-old transition from absolutism to capitalism and from absolutism to democracy.

could also use these oil revenues to buy off the citizenry through social-welfare systems, state jobs, land grants, and lucrative contracts. Their citizens became passive recipients of government largesse—paying no taxes and receiving no representation.

Empowered through oil wealth, Arab governments destroyed what had existed of civil society. The classic case is Kuwait. Kuwait has been ruled by the Al Sabah family since the eighteenth century. In 1899, it became a British protectorate. Kuwait's main export industry in the early twentieth century was pearls, and its most powerful class comprised the merchants who owned the pearl-fishing boats and who transported the jewels to and from Kuwait. The Al Sabah rulers depended on taxes from this merchant class and their boats, giving the merchants considerable power. In her history of Kuwait, *Kuwait: The Transformation of an Oil State*, Auburn University political scientist Jill Crystal recounts how, when Sheik Mubarak Al Lahab ibn Sabah Al Sabah tried to impose new

taxes in 1909, the merchants exited for Bahrain, returning only after the Sheik retracted the tax increase and apologized.

Eventually, an independent civil society might have evolved among the merchants and the sailors they employed. Trade might have nourished an independent business and professional class as it did in Southeast Asia. But, in 1938, the British-American Kuwait Oil Company discovered a massive oil field. That same year, fearing political extinction, the merchants began to organize, choosing a legislative assembly from their ranks and demanding that it have control over how the new oil revenues were disposed. But Sheik Ahmad Al Jaber Al Sabah, buoyed by the prospect of no longer depending on the merchants for state revenue, dissolved the assembly and used his augmented police force—hired with new oil wealth—to arrest the merchants who continued to protest. That was the end of the pearl merchants as an independent force in Kuwaiti politics.

Over the following decades, Kuwait's pearl industry disappeared. Investors found they could make a higher return in oil, and sailors sought lucrative government jobs. The merchants might have disappeared too, but, in the spirit of co-optation that characterizes much of Gulf politics, Kuwaiti rulers retained them by giving them state contracts and by demanding that foreign firms trading with Kuwait employ them as partners. And so, the once feisty, independent merchants became clients of the state.

Kuwait also used its oil wealth to create one of the Arab world's first welfare states. (Unlike in Western Europe, Kuwait's new social protections were motivated by co-optation from above rather than agitation from below. They were premised not on the idea that citizens had rights to the pursuit of happiness that the state must uphold but rather that a happy citizenry would not disturb the state's autocratic rulers.) Kuwait's citizens did not have to pay taxes. The state provided free health care and education, including university education. The government even paid for Kuwaitis to attend universities abroad, and it guaranteed a state job to any Kuwaiti citizen who wanted one. The same thing happened in the other Middle East oil states. As many as 75 percent of Libya's citizens had become state employees by the late '80s. In Saudi Arabia, the government used its oil revenues to buy off potential critics in the fundamentalist Wahhabi clergy. They built mosques and schools and paid the wages of the clerics themselves. University of Vermont political scientist F. Gregory Gause III writes, "Everyone in the religious sector, from the grand mufti through the members of the Higher Council of Ulama and the officials in the religious ministries to the teachers in the religious colleges and the prayer leaders of the local mosques, is an employee of the Saudi state." Whatever opposition could not be bought off has been brutally repressed by oil-funded security services. Iran's Shah, Mohammed Reza Pahlavi, became notorious for his secret police, SAVAK, but his clerical successors merely replaced SAVAK with SAVAMA.

In the Middle East, oil wealth provided a shortcut around the centuries-old transition from feudalism to capitalism and from absolutism to democracy that had taken place in Western

Europe. The oil states did not have to endure the privations of what Karl Marx called the "primitive accumulation of capital." They didn't have to coerce peasants to leave their land to become impoverished wage-laborers in order to provide profit margins for fledgling entrepreneurs. They didn't have to extract taxes from a reluctant population. And they didn't have to grant democratic rights to a citizenry that grew increasingly restive under these demands. Because of its oil wealth, Libya could go from one of the poorest countries in the world, with a per capita income of \$50 in 1960, to one of the well-to-do, with a per capita income of \$2000 just a decade later, without exacting sacrifice from its people. Lost in this developmental shortcut, however, was the creation of an active citizenry, a thriving civil society, and a democratic political system.

Today, all of the world's oil nations, except Norway, have either authoritarian governments, such as those in Saudi Arabia and Iraq, or what Carnegie Endowment for International Peace political scientist Marina Ottaway calls "semi-authoritarian" governments. Some of the latter, such as Algeria, Indonesia, and Nigeria, have embraced aspects of democracy only to fall back onto authoritarianism and one-party domination as oil revenues have provided the means for repression and corruption as well as co-optation.

ONE MIGHT ASSUME that, as these oil nations grew wealthier and their surplus profits spilled over into the population and fueled new investments, they would eventually create an independent business class not directly dependent on the state or its oil revenues. That class would in turn provide the basis for an independent civil society and for democracy. That could still happen, but it has not so far, and the reason lies in the peculiar influence that oil wealth exerts.

Oil wealth has not inspired but rather stifled the development of an autonomous bourgeoisie. It has increased citizen incomes, but it has not led to economic growth outside the oil industry. In most oil-rich countries, agriculture and non-oil industries have shrunk or disappeared entirely. Iraq became a net food importer in the early '70s. The Shah of Iran's hopes of creating an industrial giant were dashed. Kuwait invested much of its surplus overseas in other countries' industries rather than trying to develop its own. The reason? Oil wealth creates what economists call the "Dutch disease," after what happened to Dutch industry during the '60s with the discovery of North Sea oil. In oil states, oil revenues boost exports and therefore tend to increase a country's exchange rate. By 1982-1983, after a decade-long oil boom, exchange rates in seven oil countries were 40 percent higher than in 1970-1972. That made these countries' exports more expensive to purchase and therefore undermined any incentive for entrepreneurs to start non-oil industries. Oil wealth also boosts average wages for skilled workers, pricing many fledgling industries out of the world market. Why work on a pearl boat when you can take home ten times as much sitting behind a desk in a government office? Why start a risky new business when you can live off government contracts?

Several Arab governments, facing declining oil revenues, have sought to develop more diversified and independent industries, but they have been constrained by the nature of the states they created. Oil states, which depend on free trade to ensure their export revenues, can't start using tariffs to protect fledgling manufacturing industries. And, when governments in the Gulf states and Libya, like governments in other underdeveloped countries, have tried to privatize government businesses, they have run into popular resistance and resistance from within their own ranks. Gause writes of the Gulf states, "First and foremost, privatization means a loss of at least some measure of control over the economy. [These] regimes, having spent the last three decades consolidating their dominance of their economies, are reluctant to give that up. . . . [P]rivatization also means higher prices for consumers used to subsidized goods and services."

As oil revenues have declined since the booms of the '70s, many oil states have been forced to cut back their welfare expenditures. Unemployment has also risen, causing considerable popular unrest, even in the Gulf. But the opposition to authoritarian rule has not come, as it did in the early Western democracies, from an organized bourgeoisie or working class or even from political parties. The business class in these societies remains tied to the state; and the working class is either employed by the state or, as in Kuwait or Saudi Arabia, composed of foreigners with no political rights. Instead, in the Middle East oil states, the realms of potential independence from state power are occupied by the military, the Islamic clergy, and some urban professionals and students. The military has led or attempted coups in Algeria, Libya, and Iraq. And, in Iran and the Gulf states, secular professionals exerted some influence. But, in most of the oil states, the political opposition is rooted in radical or conservative Islam.

As a result, when oil-state governments have opened the door to legal opposition, Islamic radicals have most often taken the lead. In 1977, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini's Islamists took advantage of the Shah's liberalization measures (strongly urged on him by the Carter administration) to launch a movement that toppled him. In 1991, when Algeria held its first multiparty elections since independence, the radical Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) won an overwhelming victory. When Kuwait held elections to a new parliament in 1992, Islamists won the largest bloc of seats. By contrast, the liberal Democratic Forum won only two of 50 seats. One Kuwaiti cleric boasted to *The Washington Post* last month, "Whenever there is true democracy, the Islamists will prevail."

These radical Islamic movements may have demanded democratic reforms, but, for the most part, they don't believe in democracy. The Islamic movement led by Ayatollah Khomeini that overthrew the Shah in the late '70s proved no less autocratic. After the Algerian military had ousted the Islamic party in a coup, a female Algerian intellectual described the choice between the FIS and the military as being between "the plague or cholera." In the Gulf states today, many of the clerics calling for elected national assemblies remain deeply hostile to the West and to democracy.

Bush administration officials who think they can take the countries of the Middle East directly from oil autocracies to democracies are repeating historic mistakes. Vladimir Lenin and Leon Trotsky thought they could take Russia directly from peasant feudalism to proletarian socialism. Mao Zedong wanted to leap past socialism directly to communism. And Libya's Muammar Qaddafi imagined a stateless utopia on the desert sands. But the history of the Arab oil states shows the difficulty of building democracy in countries that have not yet developed full-fledged capitalist economies. When democratic reforms are introduced in a society that lacks a thriving civil society sustained by independent business- and working-class organizations, reform can create despotic reaction rather than freedom. In the Middle East, monarchy has given way to Libya's neo-communist tyranny and to Iran's theocracy.

IRAQ IS NOT an exception to this sorry history of reform-turned-despotism. After World War I, the British assembled Iraq out of three Ottoman-controlled provinces and installed King Faisal on the throne. In 1958, a military coup toppled King Faisal II. The overthrow of the Hashemite monarchy led to a tyranny—a mix of Stalinism and tribal warlordism—in which, according to historian Charles Tripp, “exclusivity, communal mistrust, patronage, and the exemplary use of violence constitute the main elements.” In 1968, Saddam's Baath Party seized power.

Oil played a leading role in this continuing drama. In fact, it has mixed with ethnic infighting to make despotism even nastier in Iraq than in its neighboring oil states. Oil was first discovered in 1927, but it was not until the mid-'50s that oil revenues, based on concessions from the Anglo-American Iraqi Petroleum Company (IPC), furnished most of state revenues. The military, led by General Abd Al Karim Qasim, seized power in 1958 partly on the grounds that the monarchy was too subservient to British oil. The United States helped Saddam and the Baath Party temporarily seize power in 1963 because they feared Qasim would nationalize the IPC; but, in 1972, after the Baath Party and Saddam had regained power, they turned around and nationalized the IPC themselves, which contributed to a dramatic increase in oil revenues in the '70s.

During the oil boom of the '70s, the Baath Party and Saddam (who consolidated his power in 1979) used their newfound oil wealth to establish patronage networks and buy off the populace with generous social welfare expenditures on health, education, food, and housing. Like other oil states, Iraq created an enormous government bureaucracy that swallowed any hint of independent civil society. From 1958 to 1977 to 1991 the number of Iraqis employed by the state ballooned from 20,000 to 580,000 to 822,000. And these figures don't include the armed forces and pensioners who received all their income from the state. By 1991, according to University of Amsterdam political scientist Isam Al Khafaji, about 40 percent of Iraqi households were directly dependent on the state for their livelihood. But Iraq also devoted almost half of

its oil revenue to building an extensive army and police force to fight the Kurds—who in 1969 had attacked the Kirkuk oil fields—and neighboring Iran, which backed the regime's Shia and Kurd opponents.

Iraq's oil income began to decline in the '80s because of the drop in world prices. Iraq also faced huge expenditures from its eight-year war with Iran and later its attempt to annex Kuwait. The decline in Iraq's standard of living, along with the massive death toll exacted by two wars, inspired opposition to Saddam's rule. But, rather than coming from merchants, manufacturers, labor unions, or political parties—the building blocks of a future democracy—it came from dissident Shia networks, secessionist Kurds, and the military. Unlike Iran or the Gulf states, Iraq doesn't have a noticeable, potentially dissident intelligentsia inside the country. Much of its professional class fled during the '80s, and the regime's attempt to diversify Iraqi industry in the late '80s fell flat. On the eve of war, much of the opposition inside Iraq still appears to consist of the Kurds, whose demand for autonomy could fracture the regime, and the Shia, who take their leadership from conservative Islamic clerics. Saddam may also have his critics in the military and in the Sunni-dominated bureaucracy, but they are not the kind of people who are well-suited to lead a democratic transformation.

None of this suggests that the Bush administration, aided by returning Iraqi professionals and Ahmed Chalabi's Iraqi National Congress, could not begin to reconstitute an Iraqi state. But it will not likely be a democratic one. Given the political history of oil states, America's primary objective should not be to immediately hold nominal elections but to gradually create a social and economic infrastructure that can sustain elected governments over the coming decades.

In *The Future of Freedom*, Zakaria argues that fledgling democracies have been best off with liberal authoritarian regimes like those that initially ruled South Korea and Taiwan and still govern Singapore. These regimes established not only order but also the rule of law and the market. They created the underpinnings for the rise of stable democracy. But, while South Korea and Taiwan had to survive treacherous transitions to democracy, they had the odd benefit of having to fall back on their own entrepreneurs and citizenry for the creation of wealth. A new regime in Baghdad will not only have to overcome a fractious citizenry and potentially hostile neighbors but also what political scientists call the “resource curse.” A post-Saddam Iraq will have to do what no other Middle Eastern or African oil state has yet succeeded in doing: building a viable, independent civil society on the economic foundation of black gold. If Cheney doesn't understand the difficulties of doing that now, he will soon. ■

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BOOKS & THE ARTS

STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS Places to Live

SOME FORTY YEARS AGO, VISITING a small town in the Midwest, I went to dinner in the local hotel and was served by a white-haired waiter, dignified but kindly, with a German accent. We conversed, and I learned that he was a Hitler refugee, the former manager of a Berlin restaurant—"Small," he said, "but with many friends." His presence, a courtly European, in this chain-hotel restaurant was a reminder of the secondary Hitler effect. The primary effect—in Europe—needn't be explained; but also there was the global scattering of those who were lucky enough to escape. No quibble about their good fortune; still, once they were out and away, they confronted new lives in new places. I had known many such people in New York, but in a small town in southern Illinois—what an emphasis.

Other emphases have been sharper. Last year a documentary called *Shanghai Ghetto* told the story of some twenty thousand European Jewish escapees who made their way to China. Now comes a German picture, **NOWHERE IN AFRICA**, which is about a German-Jewish family that fled to Kenya in 1938. This is a fictional film, but it is based on a novel by Stefanie Zweig that is autobiographical. The adaptation was done by the director Caroline Link, whose screenplay is serviceable and whose directing is generally sure.

In Breslau lives the Redlich family, well off and cultivated. Walter Redlich, a lawyer, has already gone to Kenya because he foresees what is to come in Germany; has found work on a farm, and sends for his wife and young daughter. Those two are about to leave Breslau, but Walter's father and others decline to go with them because they think the Nazis will soon disappear. Besides—o ancient mantra—though they are Jew-

ish, they are German, therefore safe. We of course know what will happen to them.

Jettel, Walter's wife, and Regina, who is five, arrive at Walter's house on the Kenyan farm. Jettel knew where she was going, but, after a Biedermeier existence, life in a tin-roofed large shack takes a bit of adjustment. The story now fixes on a matter that is not much treated in films about Hitler: the difficulties of people whose lives have been saved. New York was full of such people, who had problems enough, but "nowhere in Africa" has different problems even for those who are grateful to be out of Germany.

The Redlichs' settling into their lives, the marital frictions, the friendship of a taciturn German-Jewish bachelor who farms nearby—all are treated by Link with, if not completely smooth flow, a concentration on character complexity. The person who thrives best in the new environment is, naturally, Regina, who is overwhelmed by the novel beauty of everything, quickly learns to speak the native language, and soon becomes the pet of their Kenyan cook, a tall, sympathetic man named Owuor. (One reservation about the film is that all the Kenyan people are good and generous. One or two miscreants would have helped.)

An irony arrives. When the war begins in Europe, the British government of Kenya interns all the male German nationals, including the Jewish refugees. Walter loses his job, but Jettel gets another for him through her acquiescence to a British officer's attentions (a moment that doesn't seem as raw as it might in another place and time). Walter later serves in the British Kenyan army as a non-combatant. After the war, the second-largest problem arises. First, there was the adjustment to Kenya; now comes adjustment to the prospect of return to Germany. Walter has been of-

fered a judgeship in Frankfurt. Jettel mistrusts life among people from whom, seven years ago, her family managed to escape, as their relatives did not.

With this last marital difference, Link concludes her drama, somewhat strange yet enlighteningly so. An actor named Merab Ninidze (who was dubbed by a German actor) gives Walter an air of grudging acceptance with a touch of neurosis. Juliane Köhler gradually acquires flexibility and warmth as Jettel. Two girls of different ages, Lea Kurka and Karoline Eckertz, are pleasant and true as the growing Regina. Sidede Onyulo is perfect as Owuor. After the film, after all the immediacies of the story, I couldn't help wondering what Onyulo is doing now.

THE SAFETY OF OBJECTS begins so didactically that it almost discourages. Out of four identical toy houses come figurines, like cuckoos out of a clock, four families who are tagged with their names. Can there be any doubt that we are going to explore Suburbia—and that dark problems lie coiled beneath the neatness?

The screenplay, again by a woman who also directed, is again an adaptation, this time from a collection of stories by A.M. Homes. The writer-director, Rose Troche, undeterred by the number of previous films that have trudged suburban trails, has apparently clipped and knitted the Homes stories with the intent of making a communal design. Yet the result is not a quilt, just a succession of story snippets that keep interrupting one another.

Glenn Close plays a woman who has alienated her husband and daughter because she is so focused on her son, comatose as the result of a car crash. Patricia Clarkson plays a woman who tries to pick up young men in bars as an afternoon respite from family wear and tear. Dermot Mulroney is a lawyer who breaks somewhat loose from his life pattern when he is passed over for a partnership in his firm. Juveniles of various ages go through explorations, heartaches, acquisitions of secrecy. There are many more strands in the film, more or less foreseeable, all well enough handled by a cast whose commitment seems betrayed by the patchwork structure. Only one element connects the pieces—the drive for self-gratification. This drive is so obsessive

**NOWHERE
IN AFRICA**
(Zeitgeist)

**THE SAFETY
OF OBJECTS**
(IFC)

that it nearly blurs the difference between the adults and the children.

Bits of the dialogue have bite. Close tells a friend that, after her son's accident, when the doctors told her he might not live, she prayed intensely. He survived, but comatose. Says Close: "If you're in a praying situation with Him, be specific." And the film's last shot rounds off, in a sense, the figurine opening. A lot of the characters are

seated around a picnic table in a backyard. With a crane, the camera looks down on the overloaded table, then pulls up and up, slowly disclosing other backyards with other people, playing ball or picnicking or whatever. A snug community.

Yet, despite its strain for sharp touches, *The Safety of Objects* ends up in the Suburban Anatomy file, along with *The Ice Storm* and *American Beauty* and others. ■

Lee Siegel

Crime Scenes

Why cop shows are eternal.

HE IS THERE, DAVID CARUSO, week after week, with his red hair and narrow eyes and bitter irony, aided by the other *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation* officers, picking up the pieces of incredible violence and following them back, like Hansel in the asphalt jungle—though he follows computerized simulations of entry wounds, not pieces of bread—to the deformative trauma that shattered a life; and there is Jerry Orbach, a nice Jewish actor playing a nice Italian cop, as Lenny in *Law & Order*, who hates the scumbags with matter-of-fact irony and feels for the helpless unlucky guys driven beyond the law to defend themselves; and there is Vic in *The Shield*, brutal, good-hearted, and corrupt, way behind *CSI* in technology, and way beyond *Law & Order* in psychology. And there are a lot of other guys, and also a few women, running around the tube with a badge and a gun. The proverbial complaint that there's never a cop around when you need one may or may not be true, but there's always a cop show around, whether you want it or not.

Here is a sample of the police dramas currently on television, both new shows and old: *CSI*, *Without a Trace*, *Law & Order*, 24, *The Shield*, a new *Dragnet*, *The Division*, *Fastlane*, *Cops*, *The Sentinel*, *Streets of San Francisco*, *True Crime*, *Boomtown*, *The Wire*,

NYPD Blue, *Hawaii Five-O*, *Columbo*, *Miami Vice*, *U.S. Marshals*, *Hill Street Blues*, *Forever Knight*. At any moment on American television, someone is either committing a crime or getting arrested, shooting or getting shot, chasing or being chased. There is even a show called *Animal Cops*, which—alas—is not about animals empowered by the state

to pursue and apprehend bad animals ("Up against the wall! Spread your legs! Now spread your other legs!"). This particular brainstorm depicts real cops pursuing and apprehending miscreant schnauzers and so forth.

And in the unlikely event that you tire of any of the countless television series about the police, you can flip between cop movies and cop shows—between *Training Day*, in which a good cop battles a corrupt cop, and *The Shield*, in which good cops become bad cops while battling to remain good; or between the wildly successful

black-cop and white-cop teams in *Lethal Weapon* and *Die Hard With a Vengeance* (where Samuel L. Jackson isn't a cop but acts like one) and the current incarnation of *Law & Order*, whose writers have given Lenny a new black partner. The configurations are the same; only the names have been changed to protect against the hypercritical. On the big screen and the small, cops enthrall us the way gods and demigods captured the imaginations of the ancient Greeks and Romans.

**CSI: CRIME SCENE
INVESTIGATION**
(CBS)

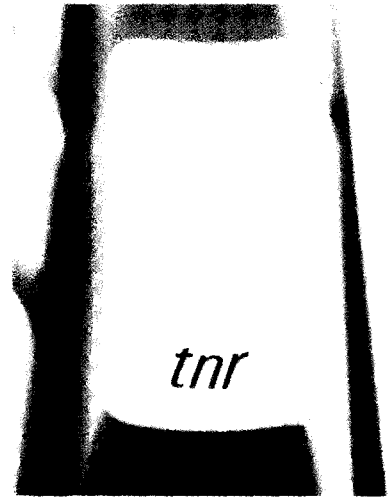
DRAGNET
(ABC)

LAW & ORDER
(NBC)

NYPD BLUE
(ABC)

THE SHIELD
(F/X)

WITHOUT A TRACE
(CBS)



Hot Button Issues

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Like the demigods of mythological yore, like Achilles with his divinely wrought shield, cops on television—they also have shields—occupy a hybrid, liminal realm. They are half ordinary citizens constrained by laws, customs, and convention, and half divinities, free to exert their will, to thwart someone else's, to punish and to kill, to set matters straight: that is, they are glamorously unconstrained by laws, customs, and conventions. When you sit for an hour in a traffic jam and fantasize about taking the motorcycle away from the guy ahead of you and tearing straight up between the lanes, you are fantasizing about being a cop.

OF COURSE, ALL THE SUBLIMINAL energy packed into the figure of the cop has a strong symbolic dimension. The dramatic, untrammelled doings of television cops appeal to the American self, with its daydream of a dramatic, untrammelled existence: television cops represent the fantastic consummation of the American promise of radical individualism. They seem simultaneously to have their way and to possess the power to keep other people from achieving theirs. The power offered by a plastic card with a big line of credit is half like the power represented by a badge.

The cop who goes too far in battling his conventional or dumb or corrupt superiors, who themselves have gone too far; or who passes beyond legal boundaries fighting a conventional or dumb or corrupt system that has exceeded all legal boundaries; or who slugs it out with bad guys just as unconstrained by law, custom, or convention as he is; or who wrestles with his own demons; or who finds himself lost and ineffectual in that realm where unthinking exercise of the will can alienate the object of desire (the realm of romantic love)—it is not too grandiose to say that the image of the American cop embodies the perpetual American dilemma: how far can individual freedom go before one person's freedom becomes another person's crisis?

That conundrum has a long history. In American pop culture, there was always the good outsider sheriff squaring off against the bad insider sheriff—Wyatt Earp; Gary Cooper in *High Noon*—or the good stranger vanquishing the established authorities that had become villainous, as in *Shane* (which means “beautiful” in Yiddish—did its Jewish writer do that on purpose?). But though the good outsiders and strangers often had complex natures—like *Shane* himself, whose noble motives were entangled with his desire for the wife of another good

man—they usually remained incontestably good. Film noir, with its morally ambiguous heroes, only occasionally influenced the cinematic image of the Western lawman.

Matters were even more clear cut on television, where after World War II the Western kept bad guys and good guys as distinct from one another as the city was from the suburbs. During the postwar exodus out from the urban centers, morally reassuring Westerns such as *Gunsmoke* and *Bonanza*, meant to be watched by the whole family, catered to the suburban imagination just as all those morally unsettling postwar film noirs, meant to be watched alone in a dark theater, appealed to the urban imagination. The cop shows of the time were even more black and white, as if these police series were as comforting as the sight of their black-and-white patrol cars. Shows such as the old *Dragnet* and *Adam-12* portrayed law-enforcement figures unobstructed by complex natures or dubious superiors. A comedy police show would be inconceivable now, but back then you had series like *Car 54, Where Are You?*—on cable you can still catch the reruns, which seem like prehistoric cave paintings—and *Mayberry RFD*, humorous cop shows featuring bumbling policemen akin to *West Side Story*'s Officer Krupke. Even the serious police dramas of the time, viewed now, seem to have a comic spirit animating their simple divisions between good and bad.

WE HAVE ALL HEARD ABOUT how the Vietnam War, and the 1960s, and the race riots, and Watergate, changed popular culture; how they made the movies, and the television, and the songs, and the musicals, more cynical, more ambiguous, more “real” about buried motives and hidden conduct. Indeed, the chief cause of reality television is that in our commercial society people have cynically come to associate artistic pretense with entrepreneurial misrepresentation; and as popular art has absorbed this skepticism of pretense and become more ironic about itself, people have come to suspect any strain of sincerity in actual life. Cop shows belatedly reflected the social and cultural movement toward “the real.” In the early 1990s, *NYPD Blue* revolutionized television cops by dramatizing their inner lives and depicting cops torn by anger, and alcoholism, and lust, and infidelity. Though these figures remained for the most part on the right side of the law, they enacted private transgressions that were at the heart

of the public crimes they were dedicated to investigating.

It might seem that with this riveting and beautifully done series television cops had become more like real cops, more like actual life. Yet since most people's perception of the police is the simple one of men and women who really are there to serve and to protect, the cardboard cops of *Adam-12* and the old *Dragnet* are closer to real life than *NYPD Blue*'s dramatic, exciting, conflicted cops. Even for the black or Hispanic kid who is being brutalized by a cop, the hackneyed simplicity of the good cop gone bad is obviously more real than the romantic image of authority figures tormented by the burden of their jobs. Justin Volpe, the cop now serving time for torturing Abner Louima, is Joe Friday turned on his head.

So rather than bringing the viewer closer to actual cops, with their (to the ordinary citizen) obscure and unknowable inner lives, *NYPD Blue* ended up making these half-divine figures of authority—the authority to interrupt a life, or the authority to take a life—transparent and comprehensible. The show simultaneously demystified them and made them unreal. It glamorized sordidness rather than exposing it. And it made the revelation of psychological forces into just another type of information. With its portrayal of cops who are just as screwed up as the rest of us, but who, like the rest of us, still get up in the morning and do their jobs, *NYPD Blue* made mysterious quasidivinities rationally apprehendable.

THREE DIFFERENT TYPES OF police shows grew out of *NYPD Blue*. The first is the simple good guy/bad guy police show like the new *Dragnet*, which is really the old *Dragnet* with more vicious crimes; and *Law & Order*, where the inner lives of Lenny (who, we learn, lost his daughter to drugs) and his partner obtrude tastefully on the plots, which are almost always complex and intelligent and wholly absorbing.

The second type is the gritty police series, which goes even further than *NYPD Blue* in portraying cops torn, conflicted, gone rotten, and in extremis. There aren't many of these: *24* has some raw, ambiguous moments, and so does *The Wire*, and so did *The Beat*, which is now defunct. The raw police show par excellence currently on the air is *The Shield*, a series that has remarkably shorn itself of glamour and romanticism. Interestingly, the “reality” police show, *Cops*, which seems to be on cable twenty-four hours a day, is closer to

the old simplistic police dramas than to something like *The Shield*, since its policemen always get their culprit, and we never see corrupt or tormented or brutal cops. What the gritty police shows did take from *Cops* is the shaky hand-held camerawork, which is one of the few romantic elements of *The Shield*, and the most down-to-earth feature of *Cops*.

The other, and far more plentiful, species of cop show took from *NYPD Blue* its style of making the cop, suspended between mortal and immortal realms, rationally knowable. For in the end Andy Sipowicz's drinking, and his violence, and his unhappiness, amplified the perception of him as a figure who could enforce his will despite the obstructions to his will. His weaknesses empowered him; the disclosure of his weaknesses empowered the viewer. The more explicit the revelation of what motivated him, the more familiar and predictable he became as a person. And this psychological omniscience of *NYPD Blue*'s scriptwriters seems to have passed into the minds of *CSI*'s and *Without a Trace*'s investigators, who couple their psychological mastery with technological fluency.

WHEN YOU WATCH *CSI* OR *Without a Trace* you are enjoying the fruits of *NYPD Blue*'s fantasy of omniscience. There is very little violence on any of these shows, which already distinguishes them from a television universe where a series like *Oz*, set in a prison, has pushed the boundaries of graphic violence about as far as they can go on television. *CSI*'s cops, though they carry highly visible, oversized guns on their hips—as if to compensate for the show's lack of violence—catch their criminals by means of forensics and various kinds of technology. Such violence as there is the show enacts through the *CSI* investigators' graphic computer simulations of knives penetrating skin, tissue, muscle, and bone. It's where Sherlock Holmes meets Popeye Doyle. Not the least of the show's enthrallments is the illusion it offers that by its imagining and then rationalizing the worst, the worst will never happen.

Without a Trace, in which detectives piece together the puzzle of a life in order to find missing persons, is more cerebral and more subdued, and yet the series also has a consoling faith in the ability of its cops to uncover the truth, always accurately, in this case by deciphering the meaning of a pause in conversation, or a shift in someone's glance. *Law & Order*

takes a different tack. In its divvying up of the program into police show (first half) and courtroom drama, which includes the categorization of information about the crime (second half), it offers a complete spectacle of the rationalization of the irrational.

While *The Shield* and the other gritty police shows enact the old drama of the American will enmeshed in its paradoxical freedoms, *CSI*, and *Without a Trace*, have submerged that drama in the world of the video game and the Internet, where the technology-created culture of engaged

isolation meets the old-time crime drama. *NYPD Blue*'s moral ambiguities have become the hard new scientific certainties. A gritty, morally shadowy drama such as *The Shield* is really a throwback to a soft bygone humanistic complexity.

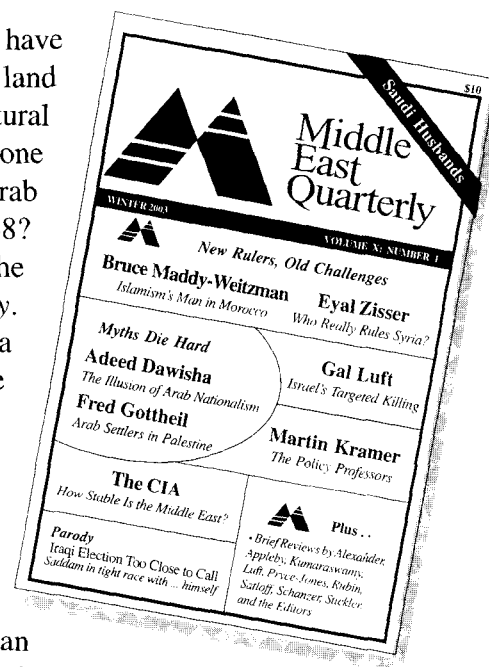
And the most significant thing about these shows, particularly *CSI*, is that they fuse the crime drama with the medical drama. The body is the most intimate, and potentially the most threatening, dimension of a person's existence, and in *CSI*'s forensic obsession with bodies—you can also flip to the fact-based series *Forensic*

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Files—viewers can be held rapt and also reassured that no wound, no invasion of the body is, in the end, fatal.

For though *CSI* is an innovative (as they say) police show, it has also pushed the medical drama into a new phase. The doctors on *ER* race to save a person's life. The cops on *CSI*, fiber by fiber, semen stain by semen stain, wound by wound, work to capture the perpetrator of the fatal blow, and thus, by finding the agent of the formative wound, they do not save a person's life—they resurrect a person from the

dead. In a similar way, the detectives on *Without a Trace* redeem a person from the ranks of the missing. As American society goes, so goes the American crime drama. If ever there was a show that expressed our solitary, computer-riveted sense of being there but not being there, of being mysteriously injured or depressed yet feeling healthy and optimistic, of being helpless to influence events but feeling strangely that we are powerful enough to do so, it is these raw, entertaining, gripping, utterly delusive fantasies of transparency and control. ■

Stephen Kotkin Truth and Consequences

KHRUSHCHEV:
THE MAN AND HIS ERA
By William Taubman
(W.W. Norton, 876 pp., \$35)

BERIA—MY FATHER:
INSIDE STALIN'S KREMLIN
By Sergo Beria
(Duckworth, 397 pp., \$26.95)

HITLER STARTED THE COLD War. Let us remember, he decisively won World War II. By 1941, through conquests, annexations, and alliances, Nazi Germany controlled all of Europe from the English Channel to the Soviet border. The defiant British, an irritant, posed no threat, and the compliant Soviets were obediently fulfilling a non-aggression pact and a trade pact with their Nazi comrades. But Hitler unilaterally broke his deal with Stalin and invaded the one country that had the power to defeat the Nazi land army, calling forth an epochal defensive war that unexpectedly implanted the Soviets in Berlin. The crusade that Hitler thrust upon the Soviets afforded them the transcendent purpose and the geopolitical aggrandizement that Communist ideology professed but that had largely eluded the Soviets outside their factory towns. The war integrated the huge village population into the revolution, extended state borders

in all directions, and brought a bonus European buffer empire. The Vozhd, as Stalin liked to be called, never had a greater partner than the Führer, not even Lenin.

And Stalin, in turn, conjured up today's Pax Americana. Flush with victory in the great war, not only did he stubbornly refuse to accept change, or to bring his devastated domestic order even minimally in line with the more powerful liberal ascendancy being imposed on defeated Germany and Japan, but he also force-cloned Soviet regimes in the windfall lands that Hitler's racist megalomania had perversely bestowed. In the years after the war, Stalin appears to have expected a capitalist crisis still greater than the Great Depression, as well as divisions among the capitalist powers even deeper than those of the interwar period. Mistake! He and his heirs came smack up against the capitalist world's greatest economic boom, while his ideologically inflected opportunism in Eastern Europe, and then in Korea, united the highly fractious Western powers and decisively mobilized the internationally circumspect United States for a sustained global campaign. Stalin is long dead and the Cold War won (except, of course, on the Korean peninsula). But the world that the Soviet menace induced, with a huge initial hand from the Nazis (and a lesser one from the Japanese), lives on: an American superpower engaged and deployed across the entire planet, not to mention outer space.

From a state's-interests viewpoint, Stalin's foreign policy stands among the greatest failures in world history. And yet the Soviet dictator cast a shadow over his heirs

as a supposed grand statesman for having vanquished Hitler and presided at Yalta and Potsdam. Following Stalin's death, when one man, again, emerged to rule one-sixth of the earth, Nikita Khrushchev inherited this confrontational security policy that failed to provide security (evidenced by a ring of American bombers based in Norway, Germany, Italy, Saudi Arabia, South Korea, and Japan). Khrushchev inherited also a boomeranging occupation of Eastern Europe, a gratuitous rift with Tito, an unresolved German problem, an unsustainably hypercentralized economy, grain harvests smaller than they had been in 1913, a self-defeating Gulag of slave labor seething in revolt, and more than two hundred million "free" people living a lie, which a majority understood in some fashion as truth.

HOW COULD A NEW SOVIET leader possibly overcome Stalin's legacy at home and abroad? Khrushchev unavoidably, and erratically, struggled to square that circle. It is strange that Khrushchev, despite his sensational denunciation of Stalin and his gripping showdowns with Eisenhower, Nixon, and Kennedy during an era of basement bomb shelters and drills to practice ducking heads under school desks, has not provoked a rich biographical literature. There is Edward Crankshaw's journalistic treatment in the 1960s, and Roy Medvedev's brief but incisive portrait in the 1980s, and William Thompson's updated overview in the 1990s, and that's about it. But now William Taubman has produced a breakthrough book. Twenty years in the making, this extraordinary tome ranks in accomplishment with Paul Preston's *Franco*, Renzo de Felice's untranslated *Mussolini*, and Ian Kershaw's *Hitler*.

Khrushchev, with three volumes of his own in English (four in the new Russian edition), was an industrious self-chronicler, an industry overseen and expanded by his son Sergei, now a scholar at Brown and an American citizen. (So much for his father's boast that "we will bury you!") Taubman makes thorough use of this remarkable record—he even listened to the disjointed master tapes from which the autobiography was culled; but he deftly corrects the Khrushchev family's version of events. He evokes the period and its personalities through a masterly use of quotations, some from older sources (such as the nonpareil insider account by Veljko Mićunović, the Yugoslav ambassador to Moscow), many from documents that were declassified

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and published in the 1990s. Taubman ably navigates the big issues in Soviet and Cold War history, and he brilliantly illuminates Khrushchev's family and inner life. His splendidly illustrated study is a consummate piece of scholarship and a delight to read. It paints an unforgettable portrait of an impossible inheritance combustibly mixed with a hypomaniac (this was the CIA's formulation) but ultimately war-wise personality. Everything, it seems, goes back to World War II.

The outcome of World War II was essentially decided on the Eastern front, before the landing in Normandy, but the war concluded with only one genuine victor, the United States, even as Britain (and more so France) rode American coattails. The war also had what might be called three fortunate losers: Japan, Germany, and Italy. And it had one other loser, the Soviet Union, although almost half a century passed before that country's defeat-in-victory became manifest. It has taken more than a decade since the climactic events of 1989–1991 to recognize the upshot of World War II and its aftermath: namely, the new-style American empire, consisting in unmatched and combined economic, cultural, military, and diplomatic power, without costly direct rule of territories, which, when taken, were relinquished. This unforeseen but logical by-product of the necessary Cold War (with all its excesses and commercial aspects) is the American situation still: a world in which everything that happens, no matter where or why, is somehow an American responsibility, so that if the United States tries to abjure this responsibility in particular cases—choosing not to act, say, in Rwanda or North Korea—it finds that its credibility comes into question. And this imperial dilemma is one that Khrushchev, ruling a far different kind of empire that controlled and in most cases subsidized colonies, faced as well.

NIKITA KHRUSHCHEV WAS BORN dirt poor in a southwestern Russian village in 1894. Fourteen years later, his landless (even horseless) farming family relocated to a mining settlement in the empire's Russified eastern Ukraine, where his father per-

formed seasonal labor. Though Khrushchev never ceased to cultivate a vegetable garden or to utilize a pungent peasant speech, he was ashamed of his rural origins and styled himself a miner's son. By the age of fifteen, having completed just a few grades at a village school, he apprenticed himself to a metalworker. Out of scrap he



*Nikita Khrushchev by Zach Trenholm
for The New Republic*

built a bicycle, then converted it to a motorcycle so he could arrive at social gatherings with a roar. Under his mother's influence, Nikita neither drank nor smoked. During World War I, when he received a skilled-worker exemption from the carnage, he helped to organize strikes against the proletariat's infernal conditions and the imperialist conflict. Mostly, though, he dreamed of returning to school to become an engineer. But revolution and civil war in-

tervened, and he became an apparatchik. Taubman calls him "the archetypal Soviet man," a climber but also a true believer.

For people of his generation who vaulted high in the new regime, Khrushchev joined the party relatively late, in 1918. His chief patron, Lazar Kaganovich, Stalin's henchman in Ukraine, was only a year younger than Khrushchev but joined the Bolsheviks in 1911. In September 1929, however, with a boost from Kaganovich, Khrushchev landed among a select hundred individuals who were admitted to Moscow's Industrial Academy. He never graduated, but he excelled in the Stalinist clampdown and party purges there, particularly against well-educated types who condescended to him. Khrushchev also palled around with Nadezhda Alliluyeva, an inconspicuous student and earnest party worker who, he discovered, happened to be Stalin's wife. Taubman speculates that Nadezhda's denunciation to her husband of Khrushchev's fanaticism may have served as an unwitting recommendation, for in 1930 one of Stalin's aides contrived Khrushchev's installation as party secretary of the academy. Two years later Nadezhda shot herself, in apparent protest against her husband's dictatorship. In January 1934, Stalin's pet—as Taubman aptly designates Khrushchev—was elevated to party boss of the Soviet capital. His leap from a mud-spattered birth village and an adopted black-lung hometown to the gilded offices and granite façades of Stalinist Moscow made the revolution personal.

Responsible for everything from garbage collection to supervision of the intelligentsia, Khrushchev threw himself into the socialist upheaval in the metropolis, and into the liquidation of his colleagues. Of Moscow city and province's thirty-eight highest functionaries, only three survived the bloodbath of the late 1930s. Khrushchev's portrait bobbed above the parading crowds. The capitalist world's prolonged Great Depression and fascism's frenzy of militarism mitigated whatever doubts surfaced about Soviet socialism, and, paradoxically, so did proximity to the dictator. In one of his spellbinding private audiences with Stalin, Khrushchev broached the subject of arrests that appeared utterly without foundation, and

Stalin replied: "I know what you mean. There are these kinds of perversions. They are gathering evidence against me, too." Call it paranoia as persuasion.

SEPARATED BY A GENERATION, THE two men shared humble origins and abbreviated formal educations; and at barely over five feet Khrushchev also stood five unthreatening inches shorter than the diminutive dictator. In 1938, Stalin entrusted him with overseeing vital Ukraine, a territory the size of France, where Khrushchev reigned until 1949, returning periodically to Moscow for Politburo meetings. In Kiev, the autocrat who loved to play the democrat took over the resplendent villa of a pre-revolutionary sugar magnate. In June 1941, when the Nazis blasted across Soviet frontiers and began bombing Kiev, Khrushchev was spending the night in his office after a defector had warned of imminent attack. Less than two weeks later, he and the entirety of Soviet officialdom deserted the burning Ukrainian capital.

For the most part, Stalin's inner circle sat at the dictator's knee in the Kremlin during the Nazi firestorm, only venturing to the front lines under heavy guard on "inspection" tours to find fault. Khrushchev, by contrast, who missed World War I, spent all of the incomparably vaster World War II on the front lines. He took a prominent part in the triumphs at Stalingrad and Kursk—and also in debacles elsewhere, for which Stalin emptied his pipe ashes on Khrushchev's bald head, though he might have made human ashes out of him. Alexander Dovzhenko, the film-maker, traversed the battlefields with Khrushchev and described a scene that they witnessed:

An airplane was lying in the road, burning: not more than half an hour had elapsed since it crashed. Near the airplane lay the pilot—legless, charred, with a white skull, armless. Naked white bones protruded from his shoulders. The co-pilot had been tossed out and lay at a distance. His head was shattered. The pink brain, hemispheres separated, lay in the stubble and large green flies crawled over it. I looked at the pilot's face, which had been covered with a cloth. A dark, bloody hole gaped in his forehead. That was where his brain had come out.

Multiply this incident by, say, twenty-seven

million. "The war traumatized Khrushchev," Taubman observes. "It drove him to smoke and to drink; it commanded more attention in his memoirs than almost any other subject." (These were precisely the chapters most abridged in the incomprehending English translation of the memoir).

LIKE NO OTHER TOP SOVIET official, then, Khrushchev knew firsthand the horrors and the blunders of the war, including his own. But "the fact that so many fought and died for the Soviet system," Taubman surmises, "deepened his faith in socialism." The war also emboldened him. Struggling to halt the Nazi onslaught, Khrushchev hurriedly inquired into the fates of purged Soviet officers, intellectuals, and political leaders, forcefully recalling many people from the camps (though none from the grave). He clashed with top military commanders, but he also established close bonds with them, and they became a crucial constituency in later power struggles.

After the hostilities, he may have risked his career trying to block the wholesale arrests of those who had the misfortune of having fallen behind German lines, insisting that they should be thanked for not having taken flight (like their would-be interrogators). Moving into a still more luxurious villa, Khrushchev made the rounds of Ukraine's shattered factories, mines, and villages, commiserating with the countless invalids, widows, and homeless. A changed Khrushchev also dared to speak to Stalin directly of the terrible famine (and cannibalism) of 1946–1947, even asking that the requisition quotas of grain for the state be reduced, thereby provoking the tyrant's wrath and a demotion, which proved to be temporary.

In 1949, the aging tyrant recalled Khrushchev to Moscow and the inner circle, making him both a target of a pending gigantic new purge and a contender in the scramble for the sick man's succession. "Khrushchev wasn't stupid," one of the big losers, Vyacheslav Molotov, snobbishly allowed. "But he was a man of meager culture . . . a very primitive man." Was the onetime peasant's ascension a fluke, then? Not in the least. Taubman's sure-handed account of the arrest of Lavrenti Beria in the summer of 1953 demonstrates that the stupendous coup against the secret police chief was indeed Khrushchev's handiwork. In the end Khrushchev proved to be the wildest in the unseemly entourage, and the most daring. The others underestimated him, just as Lenin's heirs had underesti-

mated Stalin. Consider that all the top Stalinists managed state ministries, except Khrushchev, who ran mass party organizations—and the biggest ones to boot, in Moscow and in Ukraine. He was not only Stalin's master pupil in dissembling and political intrigue, he was also a skilled politician, a barnstormer with Communist convictions, as well as a frontline veteran.

DE-STALINIZATION WOULD SEEM to be a secure feather in Khrushchev's cap, and yet his historic claim has been questioned. Huge uprisings in the Gulag in 1953–1954, when it held at least 2.5 million prisoners, had to be put down with tanks and fighter planes, demonstrating that Stalin's terrible legacy would confront his heirs whether or not they confronted it themselves. Also, Khrushchev initially resisted efforts to probe and to criticize Stalin's rule, seeking instead to scapegoat Beria for the millions of arrests, executions, and deportations. And it was Beria who initiated de-Stalinization, in the months between Stalin's death in March 1953 (happy fiftieth anniversary!) and his own execution in July—that is, three whole years before Khrushchev's secret speech at the Twentieth Party Congress. Stalin was barely cold when his police chief Beria acted on his own to repudiate the Doctors' Plot and other falsified cases, to release Gulag prisoners en masse, and to launch numerous self-serving but unorthodox initiatives in domestic and even foreign affairs, such as an unauthorized rapprochement with Tito and a proposal to cashier East Germany.

So was Lavrenti Beria, notorious rapist and torturer, the true "liberal reformer," and Khrushchev merely a schemer—not to mention an anti-Semite—who tweaked and therefore in effect preserved Stalinism? Such was Amy Knight's "revisionist" argument in her serviceable if overwrought biography, *Beria, Stalin's First Lieutenant*, which appeared in 1993. Such is also the contention of an unusual work that Knight uncomfortably denounced (in the *Times* of London) for its attempt to rehabilitate Beria, but that uncannily conveys the flavor of its subject: namely, *Beria—My Father: Inside Stalin's Kremlin*. Sergo Beria's inevitable apologia for his father, who here stands for everything good and opposes everything evil, is too absurd to warrant refutation. Anyway, Sergo—who was born in 1924 and named for Sergo Ordzhonikidze, his father's main patron and the commissar for industry under Stalin—refutes his own book. "The reader may be

surprised that I have remembered so many of my father's remarks," he writes, adding, "I was so very fond of him that every word of his is imprinted forever in my memory." This is doubtful, to say the least; and then he admits that "my father never confided his real intentions to me," and that "my father never expounded to me his views on our regime." Among the multitude of sensations not otherwise mentioned in the avalanche of revelations since 1991 but supposedly discussed in the admittedly highly placed Beria household is that Stalin had a thing for opera singers and fathered two more children after the war "with a redhead."

And yet it must be said that the younger Beria saw a great deal, thanks to a career in intelligence and military technology. He was in Iran in 1941 and 1942 to arm the Kurds so that they could be deployed to protect Soviet oil fields in Baku. He transferred to the central NKVD laboratory to study radio—the same installation, he discovered, that bugged Politburo members. In 1943, Sergo found himself in Tehran typing up translated transcripts for Stalin of the secretly recorded conversations of Roosevelt and Churchill. Two years later he performed similar duties in Yalta. Having learned German in school and from his nanny, Sergo baby-sat the captured German commander at Stalingrad in 1943 and met with rounded-up German scientists in 1945. On top of all these experiences, he came to know the regime by observing his father, and by mixing socially as well as professionally with the military elite, state functionaries, and their gossiping wives and offspring—no less than did Khrushchev's son. Indeed, his memoir aims to undo the Khrushchev family's blackening of Beria by re-directing the bile. This Beria family memoir enacts its own principal insight: that bitter hatreds formed the very essence of the Soviet regime.

Sergo draws back the curtain on a world of elite animosities. His account is premised on the genuine insight that Stalin established innumerable parallel groups on every significant issue or task. Why deliberately cultivate inefficiency? Because competitors engaged in mutual denunciations, ensuring a steady flow of information to the despot, who never became dependent on a single individual in any crucial sector. In turn, the success and even the survival of functionaries depended not just on Stalin's favor, but on the quality of their

The Blessed Redemption of Delft

i.m. Carel Fabritius (1622–1654)

Rank with clotted, simmering greens,
the sleek canals were overgrown
with shade, and then the thought of shade
the painter made his own.

The rain was taught by harder rains,
as if the heavens disagreed
with that distinguished, apostolic light
invented in his need.

He loved the century's moral itch,
the mortal purpose of the eye,
revealing what would constitute
a civilized reply.

Within the burnished, gilded frame,
the oil starts to turn to flesh,
as if the burning of long silences
let us begin afresh.

WILLIAM LOGAN

Stalin-fostered enemies—along the lines of "my father drew the conclusion that [Marshal] Konev was a shit rather than a madman." Sergo further explains that Beria's arch-enemy was Andrei Zhdanov, the party's top ideologue and a Russian chauvinist whose pretensions Beria openly mocked. But after Zhdanov came under serious attack for war-related fiascos, Beria defended him because, Sergo writes, he preferred such a worthless adversary to a more formidable replacement. In fact, when Zhdanov died in 1949, his position was effectively taken over by his protégé Mikhail Suslov, who despite a castrato voice proved more dangerous to Beria owing to his indomitable capacity for work. Francois Thom, who supplies helpful notes that question and occasionally confirm Sergo's recollections, remarks correctly upon a "hideous world, made up of petty intrigues and great crimes," a "regime of blackmailers."

The son details his father's frequent blackmailing of colleagues, showing that Beria was no "liberal" reformer, contrary to Knight. Yet Sergo's book (along with some choice declassified Politburo documents) indicates—and here Knight was on to something—that Beria represented a counterpoint to Stalin as well as to Khrushchev. Beria was a statist, dismissive of the

party. He detested Communist agit-prop and its accompanying censorship, and he proposed eliminating entirely the party's role in managing the economy and instead relying exclusively on the state apparatus, which was his power base. He did not advocate the market or political pluralism, nor did he want to dismantle the Soviet Union; but he did seek to curtail Russification, preferring to augment the autonomy and the loyalty of the non-Russian elites, his other power base. In the aftermath of the war Beria looked askance at establishing Communist regimes in Eastern Europe, but not because he was anti-empire. On the contrary, he evidently wanted to use military types to consolidate two blocs or federations, one in the north centered on Poland, the other in the south centered on Yugoslavia and Bulgaria, which would be non-Communist but economically oriented toward the Soviet Union. Were these consistent views? Could any of this have worked? Would a more federalized Soviet Union and two loyal non-Communist blocs have lasted longer than the Russian-dominated USSR or its Communist satellites?

Beria recognized his own vulnerabilities for his utmost complicity in monstrous bloodshed, and also the similar and larger vulnerabilities of the Soviet system, and he was alive to many overlooked opportunities. Alone in the hierarchy he seems to have appreciated the strategic significance, during and after the war, of Turkey and Iran. Most of Beria's personal files remain closed, but his son writes plausibly that his father hated to see Turkey so readily recruited into the American orbit. In northern Iran, according to Sergo, contrary to the party's transparently doomed intrigues to create a Communist regime, Beria stressed maintaining good relations to guarantee access to oil, or possibly organizing a putsch to bring back the Shah, who would then be beholden to the Soviets. (The CIA-assisted coup that re-installed the Shah in 1953 happened to take place one month after Beria's arrest.)

Khrushchev wrote that Beria was the sole person able to proffer frank advice to Stalin on foreign policy, but Stalin seems not to have followed it. Neither did Khrushchev, whose triumph over Beria signaled the re-assertion of the party over the state, and of Communist ideology over realpolitik. Both Beria and Khrushchev were Stalinists, but with significant variations. They

offered different paths of de-Stalinization, with divergent implications: cautious retrenchment founded on dangerous cynicism versus dangerous risk-taking founded on ultimately disabling idealism.

HAVING FAILED TO CONSULT Eastern European leaders before taking the bungee plunge of de-Stalinization in February 1956, Khrushchev hurried to Poland and delivered an impromptu second secret speech, which was recorded verbatim and has been declassified from the Polish archives. "If you ask, comrades, how we now evaluate Stalin, who Stalin was, was he an enemy of the party and working class, then the answer is no, and that's what the tragedy is, comrades," Khrushchev fumbled. "The devil knows how to explain why so many perished."

Or what the consequences were going to be. Worker strikes broke out in Poland demanding bread and freedom. It has come to light that Khrushchev mobilized the Soviet military, and in response the Poles mobilized. A "fraternal" armed confrontation was avoided only owing to the dexterity of the Polish Communist leader Wladyslaw Gomulka, and owing to the fact that Hungary also erupted. Even more startling, Khrushchev acquiesced in the overthrow of socialism in Hungary; but a few hours later he reversed himself and dispatched tank armies. "Khrushchev lurched from surrender to bloodbath in Hungary," Taubman concludes. "The whole terrible sequence confirmed that he and his colleagues were in over their heads, just as Stalin had predicted they would be." In fact, here as elsewhere, Taubman's evidence demonstrates that Stalin had bequeathed a lose-lose situation.

Blaming Stalin proved an unstable strategy for ruling his empire. Confounded by the escalating Hungarian revolt, a waffling Khrushchev lamented to Tito (as paraphrased by Mićunović) that "if we let things take their course, the West would say we are either stupid or weak, and that's one and the same thing." Worse, Khrushchev continued, people would say that "when Stalin was in command everybody obeyed and there were no big shocks, but that now, ever since *they* [meaning himself, Khrushchev] had come to power, Russia had suffered defeat and the loss of Hungary. And this was happening at a time when the present Soviet leaders were condemning Stalin." Thus, although he relished the interventionist troubles that the simultaneous Suez crisis was causing Britain and

France, Khrushchev opted for armed intervention. "If we leave Hungary," he reasoned out loud to his colleagues, "that will encourage the Americans, English, French, the imperialists. They will ... go on the offensive. ... Our party won't understand our behavior."

Indeed, perhaps the most interesting thing that we have learned from the secret archives is the difficulty encountered in controlling local party discussions of Khrushchev's secret speech, and the apparent incomprehension or outright disapproval of de-Stalinization among much of the Soviet masses. Within fifteen months of the secret speech, in summer 1957, a majority of the Politburo brazenly voted to oust Khrushchev—another fact that we have belatedly learned. Only with the determined help of younger party protégés in the Central Committee, and also of Marshal Zhukov, the wartime hero he knew so well, did Khrushchev beat back his Stalinist comrades in an eleven-day marathon showdown, cleverly branding his opponents the "anti-party group."

Just seven years later, however, the Kremlin leader was sacked by the very men who had earlier saved him. "Khrushchev's speech denouncing Stalin was the bravest and most reckless thing he ever did," Taubman concludes, echoing Roy Medvedev's view as well as other scholarship. "The Soviet regime never fully recovered, and neither did he." Much later, following the ignominious Brezhnev years and Soviet collapse, some surviving participants in Khrushchev's dismissal publicly expressed regret. Taubman's narrative, completely in command of this extensive literature, reveals the scope of the disarray in the Kremlin, and of Khrushchev's wild mood swings. "He's either all the way up," Khrushchev's devoted third wife, Nina Petrovna, confided to the wife of the American ambassador in 1959, "or all the way down."

FOREIGN POLICY, PERHAPS NOT a suitable endeavor for a manic-depressive (and an ideologue), dominates Taubman's biography. Khrushchev made himself inordinately accessible to the diplomatic community in Moscow, especially compared with Stalin; but as a result foreigners came to know, and to dislike, his unrestrained garrulity (his ramblings on agriculture alone fill eight volumes) and his vulgarity. Sipping cognac, the Soviet leader would exude charm and then suddenly explode, his folksiness turning foul. "If Adenauer pulls down his pants and you look at him from behind," he once

told W. Averill Harriman, "you can see that Germany is divided. If you look at him from the front you can see that Germany will not stand."

It was Khrushchev who never figured out what to do with Stalin's bastard East Germany. (As Beria had bluntly pronounced behind closed doors in May 1953, "The GDR? What of the GDR? It isn't even a real state. It only manages to stay together because of Soviet troops.") In 1958, the frustrated Khrushchev blockaded Berlin to force Eisenhower to recognize East Germany. Naturally, the United States refused to bow to pressure, instead pressing the re-armament of West Germany. American analysts puzzled over what Khrushchev was trying to accomplish in Berlin. What was his strategy? As Taubman shows, there was none. Khrushchev loved playing chicken—or chess in the dark, as he called it; and he regarded war threats as a method to unlock a grand peace. When Hubert Humphrey was dispatched to Moscow to divine the Soviet leader's intentions—good luck!—Khrushchev inquired about the senator's hometown and, hearing the answer, approached a wall-sized map, circled Minneapolis, and said he would spare that city when the rockets started flying. "Khrushchev's deepest fear," Taubman surmises, "seemed to be that he was being taken for a fool by the Americans."

NO EPISODE OF THE KHRUSHCHEV era, or of the Cold War generally, has been more scrutinized than the Cuban missile crisis. Scholars have argued that Khrushchev made a bold gambit to undo America's strategic advantage and to win concessions in the stalemate over Berlin. Taubman, again incorporating the latest research, suggests that Khrushchev had fallen romantically for the Cuban revolution and thus at least partially wanted to protect Castro from an American invasion—a motive, the biographer emphasizes, that Washington never imagined. Thus Kennedy's threats to Cuba helped to provoke the crisis, Taubman argues, but finally the crisis resulted from Khrushchev's impulsiveness. "What if," Khrushchev characteristically remarked, "we throw a hedgehog down Uncle Sam's pants?"

There was virtually no way the Soviet leader could get away with transporting and installing the huge missiles undetected, given the capability of American spy planes. Khrushchev had himself examined the photos that were captured along with downed U-2 pilot Gary Powers, and he knew there

were flights over Cuba. Soviet generals, whose bloated Stalin-era budgets Khrushchev kept slashing, viewed the Cuba operation as a "crackpot scheme," and wondered what would happen if it were discovered. Would Khrushchev go to war with the United States? Even die-hard revolutionaries were anxious. To Che Guevara, Khrushchev boasted: "You don't have to worry. There will be no big reaction from the U.S. And if there is a problem, we will send the Baltic Fleet." But the fleet stayed in port, while Kennedy proved ready to risk nuclear annihilation to remove the missiles. Castro cursed Khrushchev as a "son of a bitch" with "no *cojones*," but the world was fortunate that the reckless Soviet leader blinked, accepting the humiliation of retreat.

The Chinese Communists grandstanded over both the nuttiness of Khrushchev's Cuban adventure and his capitulation to the imperialists. Taubman, exploiting the recent archival bonanza in the re-examination of Sino-Soviet relations, quotes Zhou En-lai, who after a trip to Moscow wrote perceptively in his diary that, being "extremely conceited . . . lacking farsightedness, and knowing little of the ways of the world, some of their leaders have hardly improved themselves even with the several rebuffs they have met." Zhou further observed that the putative leaders of the world proletariat spoke no foreign languages and "appear to lack confidence, suffer from inner fears, and thus tend to employ the tactics of bluffing or threats in handling foreign affairs or relations with [fraternal] parties."

But what could the Soviets do with the haughty, touchy Chinese? Whereas Stalin had forced Mao in the wake of the Chinese revolution's triumph in 1949 to cool his heels for two and a half months in Moscow waiting for an audience, Khrushchev went out of his way to coddle the Chinese leader, who took the respect as a sign of weakness. Even low-level Soviet officials noticed Mao's open disdain for Khrushchev, the kernel of the momentous Sino-Soviet dispute. As for the rift with Tito, another attempted Khrushchev fix that ended in failure, the Yugoslav leader had broken with Stalin well before Khrushchev unmasked him, and he, too, insisted on presenting his country's socialism to the world as an alternative to the Soviet model. Khrushchev may have had a harder time achieving "peaceful co-existence" with the socialist bloc than with the West. And yes, he did bang his shoe at the United Nations, when a Philippine delegate turned the issue of decolonization against Moscow.

ON THE SOVIET CULTURAL THAW and Khrushchev's shouting matches with the intelligentsia, Taubman recounts the familiar episodes, such as the infamous exhibition of modern art in Moscow in November 1962, which Khrushchev furiously appraised as "dog shit! . . . A donkey could smear better than this with his tail." Taubman omits mention of the important Khrushchev-era revival of modernism in architecture and design, nor does he analyze major changes in the media such as the advent of television, or the youth culture and the sexual revolution, or the new petty-bourgeois "orange lampshade" domesticity that exploded with Khrushchev's crash construction of pre-fabricated family apartments. The biographer does examine competently Khrushchev's grandiose, hurried, almost desperate agricultural and industrial reforms, which can be summed up by a seditious poster that appeared in December 1961 in a Siberian town: "You're a blabbermouth, Khrushchev: where's that abundance you promised?"

Following his forced retirement in October 1964, there were lots of sleeping pills, tears, and dictation. Yuri Andropov's KGB

learned of the existence of Khrushchev's memoirs but did not confiscate every copy, and may even have facilitated the smuggling of the memoirs abroad for publication, an apparent conundrum that goes unexplained. Taubman also refrains from a definitive appraisal of Khrushchev, juxtaposing divergent opinions, while recognizing that Stalin remains the glass-plate negative for Khrushchev's positive historical image. The intriguing contrast, however, may be with Beria. We will never know if Beria could have sustained the dictatorship and the Union by forcing a break with communism. What we do know is that Khrushchev's liberalization aimed at revitalizing communism, far from a mere tweaking, constituted the certain path of auto-liquidation. Just ask the Hungarians, or Mikhail Gorbachev.

Beria, the capable and cynical capo of the Soviet secret police and military-industrial complex, oversaw production of the Soviet nuclear capability, which, however, he never came to control. "My father was a deeply unhappy man," Sergo Beria concludes about the animal who murdered so many before meeting the same gruesome end in 1953. "I pity him. What was left

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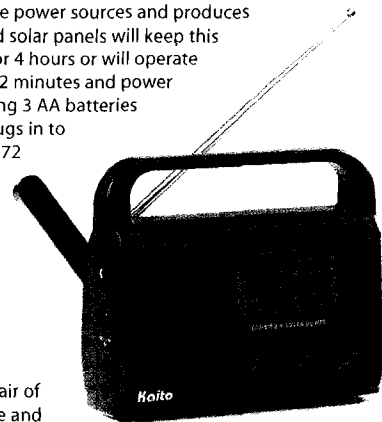
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behind him? A dreadful reputation, and the atomic bomb in the hands of those wretches." He is half right. Khrushchev could indeed be pathetic, begging his party interrogators to shoot him, but he was no wretch. He possessed far greater destructive power than Hitler had possessed, and though the Soviet leader never sought to start a war, he blustered the world to the brink. Yet Khrushchev always drew back. The cunning Communist idealist died in peaceful old age in 1971.

Khrushchev was buried on the site of a former monastery, religious ground that as a youth he had foresworn, with a headstone sculpted by a member of the intelligentsia, Ernst Neizvestny, whom he had berated. Khrushchev had once told the artist that

his work "resembles this: it's as if a man climbed into a toilet, slid down under the seat, and from there, from under the toilet seat, looked up at what was above him, at someone sitting on the toilet, looking up at that particular part of the body from below, from under the seat." And so on. Still, Neizvestny accepted a Khrushchev family private commission and created a magnificent monument. Half black, half white, encasing a bust, it expresses the stark contrasts of Khrushchev's life and times: the liberalization and the crackdowns, the quest for peaceful co-existence and the near attainment of mutually assured destruction, the hopes and the disappointments—in sum, the chimera, with all its consequences, of socialism with a human face. ■

David Thomson Locomotion

RIVER OF SHADOWS:
EADWEARD MUYBRIDGE AND THE
TECHNOLOGICAL WILD WEST
By Rebecca Solnit
(Viking, 305 pp., \$25.95)

IT IS A WONDER THERE ARE NOT more books about Eadweard Muybridge (1830–1904). He was an astonishing photographer, intrigued by both immense distances and tiny movements of the human body. To scan the superficial facts of this adventurer's life is to realize that Muybridge contributed significantly to a period of convulsive change, and that he might be the subject of a great novel. But we know only enough about him to be intrigued, not enough to furnish that fictional life.

Rebecca Solnit has never published fiction, which is not to say that she lacks a large, ambitious imagination. She has been moved to print by Muybridge, and the result is rich and rewarding, even if much of her material cannot be made to fit together. She has rescued a strange, inexplicable fellow from mere histories of photography. After this book, it will not be possible to think of Muybridge as less than one of the great uneasy Victorians.

Such a book faces the experiments that

its subject made with his own name, so that the actual humdrum English Edward Muggeridge took flight in romantic spelling and a mythical mind's eye structure. For illustration, there are the noble but mysterious nudes that march in the silent parade of Muybridge's photographed figures. But still the greatest literary thrill awaits. At some point in such a book, the author is going to be able to say—as Solnit does, on page three—that "in the eight years of his motion-study experiments in California, [Muybridge] also became a father, a murderer, and a widower, invented a clock, patented two photographic innovations, achieved international renown as an artist and a scientist, and completed four other major photographic projects."

I know, I know, you want to hear about that clock. All in good time. In life, everything stops for murder. In 1874, in San Francisco, Muybridge was forty-four. He had been married for three years to Flora Stone, very pretty, half his age, married once but divorced, a photographic re-toucher at one of the city's many galleries. A son was born to the couple in April of that year, called Florado Helios. "Helios," Greek for sun, had been a professional name that Muybridge briefly adopted as he made the career shift from bookseller to photographer.

On October 17, Muybridge found a photograph of Florado, with an inscription on the back—"Little Harry"—and "stamped

on the floor and exhibited the wildest excitement. His appearance was that of a madman; he was haggard and pale, his eyes glassy; his lower jaw hung down; showed his teeth; he trembled from head to foot, and gasped for breath. He was terrible to look at." These are the words of Susan Smith, nurse to Mrs. Muybridge, and indiscreet enough to explain that "Harry" referred to Harry Larkyns, a "man-about-town" whom Muybridge had already warned to leave his young wife alone. Yet it is plain that Flora and Harry were often together during Muybridge's extended photographic journeys. That same day, Muybridge caught the four o'clock ferry from San Francisco to Vallejo, and then went by train up the Napa Valley to Calistoga. Arriving there by 10:30 p.m., he found Larkyns in a group playing cribbage and shot him. Struck an inch below the left nipple, Larkyns staggered out of the house and died under an oak tree.

As you might expect, the trial in Napa was far more closely covered than the events of the troubled marriage. The defense was led by William Wirt Pendegast, a noted orator and a friend to Muybridge's patron Leland Stanford, president of the Southern Pacific Railroad and governor of California. The plea was not guilty by reasons of insanity. How could unreason be alleged in this Muybridge who was one of the world's finest photographers, and who had already devised a system of successive, "instantaneous" pictures, enough to prove that Stanford's horse, Occident, sometimes had all four hooves off the ground when running?

In 1860, in Texas, Muybridge had been involved in a stagecoach accident in which he suffered a head injury. The only record of the event is Muybridge's later claim that he had suffered double vision, some loss of smell or taste, and confused ideas. These symptoms are often linked to concussion, but Solnit has enlisted a Berkeley neurologist who "makes a strong case" that Muybridge suffered brain damage in Texas. "Among the common effects of these contusions," she writes, "are emotional outbursts, inappropriate social behavior, risk-taking, obsessive-compulsive behavior, and a loss of inhibition."

The Napa court did not have the benefit of those words. But it listened to stories of the accident and a few anecdotes about Muybridge being absent-minded, careless with money, and "strange." One of these tales involved him posing on a high, rocky outcrop in Yosemite—no matter that the site was famous for daredevil acts and souvenir photographs. (There is one of two ladies dancing on the jutting nose of

David Thomson is the author of THE NEW BIOGRAPHICAL DICTIONARY OF FILM (Knopf).

flat rock). Pendegast was magnificent if corny on behalf of Muybridge:

I cannot ask you to send this man forth to family and home—he has none. Across the arch of his fireplace where once was written the words Home—Wife—Child—Content and Peace, there now appears as a substitute for all, placed there by the destroyer, the single awful word “Desolation.” But I do ask you to send him forth free—let him take up the thread of his broken life, and resume that profession upon which his genius has shed so much luster—the profession which is now his only love. Let him go forth into the green fields, by the bright waters, through the beautiful vallies, and up and down the swelling coast, and in the active work of securing shadows of their beauty by the magic of his art, he may gain “surcease of sorrow” and pass on to his allotted end in comparative peace.

The jury—twelve married men from rural California in 1875—argued into the night. They were split at first, then the persuading began. Next morning they acquitted Muybridge. More than that, they ignored the judge’s instructions and said that the killer was not insane either. Frustrated in attempts to get a divorce or alimony, Flora died a few months later. (She alleged in divorce filings that Muybridge watched her as she slept.) A local paper said that she was out of her mind. Muybridge put the surviving son, Florado, in an orphanage and never had anything else to do with him. Florado died in 1944, but Solnit has seen a picture of him as an adult (it is not included in this book) where something like resemblance suggests to her that he may have been Muybridge’s son after all. (When it comes to seeing such resemblances, photography sheds its famously factual nature and becomes illustration to a novel.)

I HAVE RECOUNTED THE CIRCUMSTANCES of murder and trial in as matter-of-fact a way as possible to stress how much they belonged to their moment and place. Muybridge behaved like a successful, privileged male in an age when San Francisco was dominated by that kind of club ethos. On the journey from the city to Calistoga, he had time to nurse his revolver and to calculate that a local jury would likely arrive at the conclusion that any wronged husband had something like a right to kill the other man.

There was no need to mask premeditation and simple accomplishment (just one shot would do), and no ultimate reason to claim insanity. The thinking was orderly, and, as passing time rid Muybridge of his rival, his wife, and then his son, he passed on to the work that he loved.

The nurse, Susan Smith, saw a man in disarray at the discovery that Florado might not be his own son. But Muybridge delivering one shot hours later is a composed figure, someone in whom the heat of the moment has turned to malice and calculation, who seems even to have concluded that whatever he once thought of Florado, and whatever love he had felt for the infant, there was no need now to persist with it. It is a little easier to believe that Eadweard Muybridge was a local, selfish bastard (a man of his time) than that he was a strange poet of disturbed mind.

Solnit is not comfortable with Muybridge the man, but that difficulty comes in great part from the enormous load that she puts on him as a cultural figure. You can feel some of that in this halting, then leaping, process of admiration, or elevation:

He was a murderer. But it is impossible to despise and dismiss him. He was a damaged man, an isolated one, and apparently one who suffered deeply. If he had been pure prodigy we could label him such and file him away in one of history’s commodious drawers. . . . The alienation that is a hallmark of Muybridge’s personal life is evident in his photographs; the independence of vision in the photographs also characterized his maverick life. But the masterful clarity of Muybridge’s photography is in stark contrast to the emotionally overwrought man on exhibit in the trial. The “great man” version of history has been much attacked in recent years, but Muybridge is worth examination not because without him there would have been no movies but because with him we can start to understand something about their source.

This book is not a biography of Eadweard Muybridge. The known facts about this odd man are gathered, but that only indicates that we know too little to make a whole story of his life. So, somehow, the historian and the onlooker have to reconcile those facts, the profusion of the Muybridge photographs generally known as the Animal Locomotion series, and an 1872 snapshot of him sitting on a packing case

beneath a sequoia tree in Yosemite—fierce, impacted, tense, handsome, passionate, angry, intellectual, forbidding. All of those adjectives fit without any sure need for such captions as “disturbed, deranged, mad.” Yes, he looks obsessive, but even in 1872, I think, one might have some reason to wonder whether this is the true imprint of obsession, or the picture of a man trying to signal, “Don’t disturb me, because I’m obsessed.” Or damaged. Or whatever.

Even if *River of Shadows* is finally as beyond categorization as it is marred by its very large assertions, still it is a book of enormous intelligence and fascination. Solnit’s previous books include *Wanderlust*, a history of walking; *As Eve Said to the Serpent*, a study of landscape, gender, and art; and *Savage Dreams*, an account of the landscape wars of the American West. She would seem to be a natural scholar, an intense fabricator of far-reaching ideas, and—most of the time—a careful, elegant writer who can lead willing students up precipices of thought. But the question she never quite addresses is whether, on the brink, it is more proper to jump in the hope of soaring or to find a careful way down.

CONSIDER SOLNIT’S ASSERTION that there would have been no movies without Muybridge. It is certainly true that, after his trial for murder, and with the renewed support of Leland Stanford, Muybridge embarked in the early 1880s on a crucial series of still photographs of horses in motion that employed radically briefer exposure times than had been known before, and devoted several pictures or exposures to as little as one second of real time. Then, with the use of a kind of zoetrope—a spinning apparatus that allowed the eye to fix on these successive images in sequence—the appearance of real motion and passing time was obtained.

This accomplishment attracted enormous attention all over the world, and rightly. A technical breakthrough had been demonstrated; and the results were beautiful and mysterious in ways that still defy verbal description. But that is not the same as saying there would have been no movies without Muybridge. It had been foreseen for years before 1880 that something like the technology of moving film was within reach. Among those encouraged and stimulated by Muybridge’s demonstrations were Etienne-Jules Marey, Thomas Alva Edison, the Lumière brothers, and the Eastman Kodak people, all of whom made contributions to the gradual development of moving

film. And all of whom depended on us, the audience, to show them how powerful the invention might be.

In fact, Muybridge showed no special enthusiasm for that end. From the studies of horses he moved on to those grave, epic, dreamlike studies of fundamental human movements—a man walking, a woman pouring water, an umbrella being opened—that are the material of *Animal Locomotion*, and, I think, the great work of his life. Muybridge was self-taught, a bit of an adventurer and an opportunist, and responsive to money, but he did not really join in the chase for moving pictures that culminated in 1895. Indeed, in 1894 he returned to England and to the small town of Kingston, southwest of London, where he had been born. He lived there for a decade more, doing very little as far as research can tell, yet somehow inclined to settle for the mists and the chill and the tame views of Thames life, no matter that he had once surveyed the marvels of Yosemite.

Evidently, something in the adventurer, in the commanding seer of epic views, remained English, provincial, and banal. This is hardly consistent with the life of risk-taking, the loss of inhibition, and so on anticipated by that Berkeley neurologist. Solnit says that Kingston was not far from London in Muybridge's day. But recall how in the movie *The Hours* Virginia Woolf loathes the huge cultural gulf between "town" and Richmond, her resting place, which was closer to London than Muybridge's Kingston.

HAD MUYBRIDGE NEVER existed, there would still be movies, and probably they would have pierced the darkness of a Paris salon just as they did in 1895. Far too many inventors and businessmen were pursuing the trail. More to the point, there was a pressure in society, a need for some kind of mass medium, not just storytelling or a show for everyone, but a communal focus for that startling new urban phenomenon, the masses. In exploring the history of the movies, in other words, it is beside the point to look for heroic figures who did it and determined it. None of the actual pioneering figures—and this is true of Edison and of the Lumière brothers—had any sure sense of how what we now call "the movies" would turn out.

Solnit's assignment of so much credit to Muybridge is romantic and almost yearning, and it is inspired by her own introduction, sweepingly titled "The Annihilation of Time and Space." That is a ringing title, to

be sure, and it is not hard to grasp, or to share some of Solnit's intellectual excitement. But the slogan claims much more than her story supports. It is the self-assigned gospel of *River of Shadows* that toward the close of the nineteenth century, enormous changes sound together like the different impulses or themes in an Ives symphony. The railroads and telegraphy make the United States smaller; and photography and the movies altered our ordinary relationships with time; and all of this was in the new world's new world, the glorious West, a place where, eventually, through Hollywood and Silicon Valley, new technologies would shape the mind of the world.

Well, wait just a minute. It is certainly true that the railroads changed the potential for travel in the United States—and opened up the touristic and picturesque value of the West, something that may have driven Muybridge into photography as a new career. And it is true that Ulysses S. Grant had said, in 1839, that train travel (at an average of twelve miles an hour) had "seemed like annihilating space." But that is pre-presidential talk, if you like. (Even the ex-president of Princeton, Woodrow Wilson, was one day hustled into promospeak when he said that *Birth of a Nation* was like "history written in lightning," as opposed to lies in the limelight.) Space was not annihilated, even if life was enriched and accelerated. Indeed, Muybridge's own landscapes, and his fastidious panoramas of San Francisco, attest to the new glorification of real space, of physical vista and actual distance. While it is true that in Muybridge's pictures people sometimes seem like the tranquil pilgrims of an eternal treadmill, those pictures are nonetheless full of a sense of journey, of space being traversed—by a stride, a glance, a thrown ball, a somersault.

Just as you can argue that the era showed a new awareness of the finite detail of space (as well as its epic splendor), so the new insights of photography did not really collapse or kill time. Rather, they allowed us so many new ways of playing with it. (Allegedly, those first pictures of the horse Occident—whether he ever lost contact with the ground—were made to settle a wager or an argument.) The eye had never seen, or known it was seeing, certain anatomical attitudes before, or not until Muybridge's fractional exposures. And, yes, with the zoetrope and its brothers, the semblance of motion could then be reproduced. But there were other, playful variations possible: the motion and the second could be enlarged or compressed—thus the rapture of

slow motion or the giddy slapstick whirl that we now associate with silent pictures. Most lovely of all, forward time could run backward: the diver could arch, feet first, out of the water, inhaling the outburst of his own splash and then curving back though space to land on the diving board, on tip-toes. But the earnest Muybridge was not much interested in or amused by reverse motion, whereas many of the earliest poets of film (Buñuel, Vigo, Clair, Vertov) could not take their eyes off it, and were plainly re-vivified in their sense of the beauty of all motion by the solemn or surreal farce of having everything go backward.

IT IS THE SERIOUS LIMITATION OF Solnit's book that strident theorizing (often at odds with her subtle eye for real insights) and a kind of California boosterism come together in an ecstatic vision of a world changed by Muybridge:

The story of what Muybridge accomplished with Stanford's support is a peculiarly Californian story. Much has been written about the artistic and literary modernism that was born in Paris, but only high culture was born there, though that high culture was a response to the pervasive alienations and liberations brought by industrialization. Another part of the modern world came from California, and this part was and is an amalgamation of technology, entertainment and what gets called lifestyle. . . . This book is about those years that followed upon that encounter between photographer and racehorse and about that man who seems in retrospect like a bullet shot through a book. His trajectory ripped through all the central stories of his time—the relationship to the natural world and the industrialization of the human world, the Indian wars, the new technologies and their impact on perception and consciousness. He is the man who split the second, as dramatic and far-reaching as the splitting of the atom.

That last comparison seems to me little more than literary, just as it is rather hurried to dismiss Paris as the venue of high cultural innovations. In the way that atoms would be split, Muybridge did not split the second. Instead he isolated and stilled fractions of a second, turning them into beauty, iconography, and the germ of narrative. But still photography had always been intrigued by those prospects, and Muybridge always

saw the movement of photographs as a scientific or technological wonder, instead of a perceptual breakthrough. Nothing in Muybridge's life suggests that he had ever grasped the way in which movies began to displace life, began to make it theatrical or fictional, began to ask participants to be viewers. Those changes are profound, but Solnit never notices them.

Paris, let us admit, was the place where movies were first projected—just as, time and again, it has been the city where the most startling imaginative powers in film have been noticed. It was also the city that pioneered iron and steel work, underground railways, Cubism, and Surrealism. I live in San Francisco too, and I also love the West, but I have to admit that there are afternoons when Paris still seems the center of the world. You can rave about the innovative, mind-making role of Hollywood—but then you must admit how horribly archaic so many of its new films are.

ALL THIS DOES NOT MEAN THAT we have no need to attend to Eadweard Muybridge. Solnit assesses him in all his genres: as a photographer of the Modoc wars, as a landscape man, as the rapt assembler of so many sections of a meticulous yet unpopulated San Francisco, and then as the visionary of animal locomotion. In that process, Muybridge gathered over thirty thousand plates of men and women—many of them nude, some of them himself—and had the results published. He was surely right in doing so. For although these stills seem to wait for the slightest trigger to become animate, they are beautifully in their element, row upon row, as the stages of pointless exercise: a baseball pitcher pitching, a cricketer playing a shot.

In 1885, working at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, Muybridge employed a twenty-year-old woman named Blanche Epler, naked, and handsome if not quite beautiful, for several magnificent sequences of ordinary motion. It is not that these pictures are erotic—indeed, they are impressive for how little sense of sexuality they possess—but still, for that moment in the Victorian age, there must have been those who were startled or troubled by this mixture of candor and science. It is here that Solnit reaches the very best level and tone of this book:

On the morning of October 16 [1885], Epler lies down and rises, kneels and prays, pours water from a pitcher, and ascends stairs with a lamp for the cam-

era. It's a sequence that seems to begin with awakening and end with departing. Were these animated together they would present far more sophisticated narratives than, say, the first films of the Lumière brothers, which took a single action as their subject—a train arriving, workers leaving a factory, a baby being fed.

But in some ways Muybridge was far from film and theater: his models kept a kind of reserve even nude, even in the most intimate acts that connected them to his earlier photography. He photographed the impersonal, landscape, architecture, and groups engaged in action. He never made a portrait, and there was something curious in all his photographs of people, a sense of psychological distance, a failure to connect. The figures often

seem abstracted, attuned neither to the photographer nor to each other. Pretty Blanche Epler with thick fair hair down to her waist was immeasurable distance away in her own thoughts, more a body than a person, not as women are bodies in pornography but as people are bodies in anatomical and medical texts. Unlike an actress, she was not emoting or expressing for the camera; she offered it only the motions of her body.

Here, and in many passages like this one, this book is haunting as well as frustrating—and maybe in some scattershot, roundabout way it brings life back to clocks and to journeys, just as it reminds us of the part of time and distance in beauty, and also in the murder and the pretty thorough annihilation of Flora Muybridge. ■

CORRESPONDENCE

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friendship between countries has nothing to do with how often the leaders pronounce this friendship. Actions are more important than words. In the editors' praise for Spain and Italy, they seem to forget that Germany has dedicated more troops to the fight against terrorism than Spain and Italy combined. This, under a Red-Green government! Germany and the United States have different opinions of how to resolve the Iraqi problem. It would be wise for the U.S. government (and for TNR) to try to understand the reason for these differences and not to assume mere obstructionism. Global leadership is based on mutual trust and respect; if these elements are missing, you get imperialism.

GERD KORTUEM
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MAD CAMPAIGN

GOVERNOR HOWARD DEAN HAS consistently represented his position on Iraq in multiple appearances and interviews (Ryan Lizza, "Front Load," February 24). While slightly more complicated than other candidates' outright support or opposition to the war, it is nonetheless a clear and easily understood position. Is it necessarily disingenuous of Dean to front-load his opposition to the war as opposed to the more nuanced requirements for the terms under which he would support one? Or is the opposition the other candidates

feign outside the Senate chambers, while still voting to grant the president a blank check for action, even more so? TNR has a responsibility to present the facts as they stand: Governor Dean has consistently held a position of opposing the war on Iraq while indicating the terms under which he might be forced to resort to it. And isn't that the type of depth we want in a president?

DOUG BUSK
Atlanta, Georgia

"PROSTATEGATE"? DO YOUR WRITERS allow themselves every luxury in the pursuit of the tired conventions of yellow journalism? Ryan Lizza writes in the passive voice when he says, "What should have been a moment of sympathy for [Senator John] Kerry was already morphing into another story about his candor," though it is Lizza who actively manufactures "prostategate" with his own story.

I think Senator Kerry should be left the allowance for discretion and the allowance for uncertainty about his own health. Many men, in wanting to shelter their own failing health from their family and close friends, leave prostate and colon cancer untreated for years and consequently die from it. That Kerry took a week or two to hash out how he would proceed with this, a condition that killed his own father, says less about his "candor" than it does about the difficulties of aging and serious illness.

ANDREW MAXWELL
Los Angeles, California

CAMBRIDGE DIARIST

Failed Experiments

ONCE BEFORE, A NATO POWER chose sides between its own allies and an Arab tyrant. And it wasn't France (or, for that matter, Great Britain). It was the United States, then governed by Dwight D. Eisenhower, who took his big ideas and moral compass from John Foster Dulles, the secretary of state. The issue at hand was the British and French response to Gamal Abdel Nasser's nationalization of the Suez Canal, which they had built, which they (more or less) owned, and which they saw as both evidence and insurer of their power in the Mediterranean. But what was at stake in their desire to forcibly overthrow (with the armed action of Israel in the Sinai) the regime of the colonels was not just the Suez or the sea from Malta to Turkey but their own viability as actors in grand politics. Dulles did not really like Nasser and had offended him by forcing the World Bank to cancel financing of the Aswan Dam. But Dulles saw using the Egyptian president as a way to put the United States on the right side of history: against the residual imperialism of its NATO partners, in sympathy with the very much aligned "nonaligned" bloc, and with the principle that not might but the United Nations should decide what was right.

OF COURSE, DULLES AND THE FOGGY Bottom professionals also had other interests in mind, among them a desire to so weaken Great Britain and France in the region that they would cede their oil interests to the United States. Or, as one clear-eyed observer of U.S. actions would later comment, "I had the impression that, under a cloak of a benefactor and supporter of national aspirations in the Middle East, there was the desire to cut the throat of British influence in the Persian Gulf." Whatever its motive, America's decision to force Britain and France to back down during the Suez crisis—when the nuke-rattling Soviets were butchering Hungary, no less—did not turn out well. Ten years later, Nasser launched his May 1967 offensive against Israel and provoked the Six Day War. In his efforts to make himself leader of the Arab world, and with his now-forgotten use of chemical weapons in Yemen, Nasser anticipated Saddam Hussein. But it was in the Suez crisis that Nasser managed to divide

the Western powers. As Elie Kedourie has argued, the humiliation of the Fourth Republic helped bring Charles de Gaulle out of sullen retirement, premiering the long-running drama of a disintegrating NATO.

THE ALLIANCE BETWEEN THE UNITED States and Britain did not disintegrate, however. And it endures today. Tony Blair is an exemplary friend. Unfortunately, his Labor Party has for years been paving the way for a pathetic Britain or, as its proponents used to disguise it, a "United Nations Britain." In some Labor constituencies, an affinity for Third World peoples translates easily into sympathy for Baathist Iraq. (Which is hardly surprising: Labor also hosted Stalinists and Maoists in its day.) Despite all this, Blair has been steadfast; and we owe him. The currency in which he has chosen to be paid, however, is counterfeit. And its duplicity may come back to haunt us all.

THE MEDIUM OF EXCHANGE IS THE ROAD map to peace between Israel and the Palestinians, first announced on June 24, 2002, and left dormant because the holy terrorists and illegally armed militias wouldn't stop murdering Israeli civilians, one of George W. Bush's preconditions for the scheme. Bush's recent, high-profile endorsement of the map gave Blair something to throw the British left to show that he'd gotten something for his support of the war. What he threw them was the principle of evenhandedness: We're settling the problem of Iraq, and, therefore, we're also settling the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians. But these issues have literally nothing to do with each other. Solving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict won't solve America's (and Britain's) problems in the Middle East because the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is at the heart of the domestic problems of only one Arab state, Lebanon. And, even there, a Palestinian state won't help very much.

IN FACT, A PALESTINIAN STATE ON THE West Bank and Gaza won't conciliate even the Palestinians. Most of them will still want Israel. Which is why the obsession of the "peace processors" with stopping new Israeli settlements in the contentious territories is largely irrelevant. In the context of a realistic agreement, I'd favor such a cessa-

tion (and the withdrawal from some settlements, too). But such an agreement won't emerge until Muslim would-be martyrs stop targeting random Jews. And, besides, what does any of this have to do with Iraq? Israel, after all, does not use biological or chemical weapons, and its wars are wars of defense. If anyone in the conflict has affinities with Saddam, it is the Palestinians. The main difference between the Palestinian leadership and the Iraqi leadership is that the Palestinians don't have a state through which to pursue their frightening ambitions.

THE ROAD MAP IS A PRODUCT OF SOMETHING called the Quartet, a fictional musical group comprising the European Union, the U.N. secretariat, Russia, and the United States. Its sounds are discordant. Everybody save the United States puts the burden on Israel to start the process. But that is not President Bush's view, and it certainly isn't Ariel Sharon's. One of the prerequisites of the futuristic plan is that the Palestinian leadership become more accountable and even democratic. And, under duress, Yasir Arafat has now designated a prime minister, Abu Mazen, with whom Israel is ready to try doing diplomatic business. But only if he has real power, which, as of now, we cannot be sure. In an article in the March 17 *Weekly Standard*, Robert Satloff notes that no Arab country, with the exception of Lebanon, has a prime minister who means anything. Not one is the leader of a parliamentary majority, not one supervises the army or intelligence service, and not one directs his nation's foreign policy. Maybe Abu Mazen will be the first; I wouldn't bet on it. Unfortunately, Blair already has. After his Azores reunion with Bush, both Blair and the Spanish premier saluted Abu Mazen as if he already held substantial powers. That enthusiasm may turn out to be an embarrassment.

AND THERE IS ONE MORE PROBLEM: The Quartet has no standing with Israel. Neither the Russians nor the Europeans nor Kofi Annan has ever produced a meaningful concession from the Palestinians or from an abutting Arab state. Especially in light of their behavior over Iraq during the last half-year, they should have no standing with us either. What would President Vladimir Putin or Foreign Minister Dominique de Villepin actually bring to the Mideast negotiating table? OK, give Tony Blair a seat at the table. He deserves this medal for bravery. But he should be careful about what he says: He is too eager to please, when pleasing also misleads.

MARTIN PERETZ

The Dilemma of Reforming a Post-Saddam Iraq

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Two crucial debates underlie America's present situation in the Middle East. The first concerns whether the United States can graft a democratic system on an authoritarian regime such as Iraq's, a state that has no history of democratic rule. The second debate involves the sources of differences between the West—the societies of Western Europe and North America—and other cultures around the globe.

To understand how Western political and economic systems might be transplanted into a post-Saddam Iraq, we need to understand what is "Western" about our culture, politics, and economics. Those three aspects were not only developed in tandem but mutually support one another.

The West's first distinctive characteristic is its culture of literacy and individuality. Written records undercut oral myths, established factual accuracy, and allowed authors to adopt critical positions that challenged received opinion. Over several centuries, this gave rise to a culture whereby individual integrity trumped the conformism of community doctrine. This legacy of literacy and critical thinking became linked to a Judeo-Christian religious sensibility. The result is a culture that emphasizes the sanctity of life, the value of the individual, and redemption through historical progress.

The West's second distinctive characteristic is its political institutions. Those institutions take three forms: electoral suffrage, federalism, and checks and balances. Those forms operate jointly to limit the authority of government and thereby reduce the stakes of politics. They also work to limit corruption and rent seeking (a person or group seeking to obtain special political favors at the expense of others). Those institutions accomplish these goals either by

creating ex ante vetoes that limit their leaders' discretion (for example, presidents must obtain congressional approval before acting on new policy proposals) or by creating ex post sanctions on leaders who exceed their authority (by being voted out of office).

The West's third characteristic is its system of economic institutions that support markets. Markets exist in other parts of the world, but only in the West do political institutions enforce property rights with such uniformity. Indeed, in most developing societies political officials prey on markets and private property. In many nations, administrators enforce some individuals' property rights but not others—giving rise to cartels and thereby precluding competitive markets.

The combination of a culture of individualism, institutions of limited government, and free market economies has succeeded in unleashing human creativity, producing wealth, and raising people out of poverty.

As beneficial as it would be to reproduce these conditions in Iraq, we should not underestimate the difficulties that lie ahead. More than a change of regime will be required. **Establishing democratic capitalism will involve a profound transformation of cultural values, governmental institutions, and economic behavior.** This is a worthy goal, but it will require a long-term commitment.

Too often, new democracies in former authoritarian regimes fail because they lack one or more of the three critical characteristics that distinguish the West. Establishing a stable democratic-capitalist system in a post-Saddam Iraq will require both political and economic reform, as well as encouraging the virtues of a free society among Iraqis.

— Russell Berman, Stephen Haber,
and Barry R. Weingast

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